Participatory Metrics Report

Quality Metrics National Test

CultureCounts | QUALITY METRICS NATIONAL TEST

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This piece of work was designed to build on previous Arts Council England (ACE) funded work led by Matthew Bourne / New Adventures. The Quality Metrics National Test phase provided the opportunity for those participatory metrics to be further developed. The core aim was to produce a refined set of participatory metrics that would be suitable for the diversity of organisations represented in the ACE portfolio and to ensure they aligned with the CYP quality principles.

ii. The Recruitment of the Organisations

Through the Expression of Interest (EOI) phase for the Quality Metrics National Test, Culture Counts, working with Arts Council England, developed a short list of cultural organisations that were invited to take part in this participatory metrics strand, which also drew from members of the existing CYP network of ACE funded organisations. A number of organisations from outside the funded portfolio were also invited because of their specific expertise. As a result of the high level interest shown, the participatory metrics cohort was made up of 20 organisations (see Appendix One for the full list of participants), operating under two agreed modes of participation:

- Those organisations offering their expert views on the metrics who would attend the Learning and Insight workshops to discuss and refine the metrics
- Those organisations operating as above but who would also carry out evaluations using the participatory metrics and who would share their data and experiences with the rest of the group at the Learning and Insight workshops

iii. The Process

As with the Quality Metrics National Test strand on the Quality Metrics, the participating organisations were provided with logins to the Culture Counts platform and supported to carry out their evaluations independently. It was stressed to all the cultural organisations who would be evaluating a participatory event that they were free to choose which of the metrics they wanted to use, and to suggest alternative / additional metrics that they felt they needed to capture the quality of the participatory experience they were offering. The aim was to not only improve the metrics and check their alignment with the quality principles but also to analyse the extent to which they were grouping together in natural clusters, in terms of which aspects of the participatory process and associated outcomes they were measuring. Eleven cultural organisations within this strand carried out 24 evaluations collectively.

Key Findings

i. Sophistication of Existing Evaluation Frameworks

Judging from the cohort of cultural organisations taking part in this strand of work it would seem that cultural organisations with highly developed practice around participatory work invariably have very well developed evaluation models in place that they are using to review the success of that work, both at a process level (e.g. Did we pick the right artist? Was the activity well designed and specified?); and an outcome level (the intended outcomes they wanted the activity to provide for participants e.g. confidence; skills; creative expression).

ii. The Integration Challenge in Evaluation Design & Planning

Unsurprisingly perhaps, the well-developed evaluation frameworks being used by the participating organisations meant that adopting and deploying the participatory metrics for participants and peers raised issues of how best to integrate these new metrics within their existing evaluation practices. For example, the integration challenges here included using the metrics within multi-stranded evaluation approaches; or concerned getting 'everyone on board' with a particular approach to evaluation (such as the metrics) when a cultural organisation is working on a project with multiple partners who may have other targets and objectives that are important to them and that they were keen to measure.

iii. Metric Choice, Use and Refinement

The key headline is that all of the original set of participatory metrics were chosen and used across the evaluations. Therefore, this wider testing process confirmed that the original set of participatory metrics are relevant evaluative measures across the broad spectrum of participatory activity featuring in this study (which will be representative, if not comprehensively so, of participatory work taking place across the funded portfolio). The range of new metric statements produced suggests that the first pilot exercise definitely missed some important outcome categories that cultural organisations are seeking to impact upon in their participatory work. The outcome areas that felt like significant new additions, as opposed to complements to some of the existing metrics, were:

- Trust: 'I trusted the other people involved'
- Identity: 'It helped me to see myself differently'
- Intention: 'I felt able to shape the intention of the project'
- Creative Legacy: 'I now have creative ambitions I didn't have before'

iv.   Participatory Metrics Outcomes Clusters and Themes

Throughout this strand Culture Counts has sought to work with the participating organisations to explore 2 inter-related questions:

- Are the different participatory metrics measuring different clusters of outcomes?
- If so, would it be possible to group and cluster the metrics by outcome area?

As we analysed the evaluation results, and engaged in discussions with the organisations about their evaluations and reflections, it became clear that the participatory metrics are measuring 3 inter-connected clusters of outcomes, namely:

1. Conducive Environment
2. Experience
3. Participant Development

The key outcome clusters for the participatory metrics set
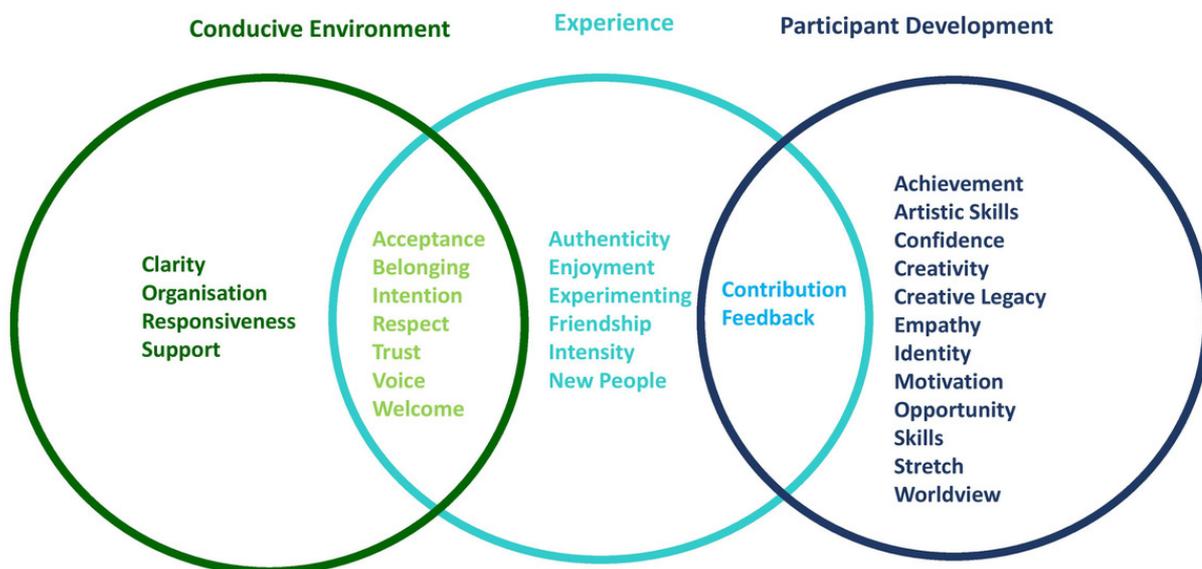
The participating organisations strongly supported the clarity offered by identifying the specific measurement territories the different participatory metrics are capturing. This represents a significant maturation in our understanding from the original pilot study, and has a number of benefits confirmed by the participating organisations:

- It helps cultural organisations to visualise the key value range being created by their participatory work

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- Understanding that value range allows organisations at project planning stage to use something like the participatory metrics wheel (see section 4.4.) as a sense check against which to frame and mould the aims and intentions of the project (or their detailed logic model if one is being used)
- To then use any resulting insights from this sense-check to inform the design of the project and its evaluation

v.   Ensuring the metrics provide a rich professional development opportunity for creative professionals

The participating organisations felt that the peer process could be enriched, and that for some peers it felt 'too quick' in so far as the peers would have welcomed a greater opportunity to feedback and discuss what they had seen. Clearly, part of this request could be met by cultural organisations engaging peers around the results and seeking further comment and discussion with them about their responses, and any marked observed differences between self, peer and participant response. It is also clear that the participating organisations support the development of a richer set of questions for peers, most likely more open questions, with suggestions such as:

- 'What did you learn from the work?'
- 'What will you take into your own practice?'

vi.   The participatory metrics and the CYP quality principles

The original participatory metrics set that has been refined and tested in this project had already been shown to demonstrate a strong degree of alignment with Arts Council England's CYP quality principles. Given that the original metric set dimensions have been endorsed as relevant measures by the participating organisations in this study, with only 4 additional outcome dimensions being added, this strong degree of alignment remains in place. The key metrics clusters (conducive environment; experience; participant development) map very comprehensively across the seven CYP quality principles, with the participating cultural organisations in this study acknowledging that there was a good fit between the participatory metrics and the CYP principles.

vii.   Feedback on the metrics from the organisations carrying out evaluation events

In addition to metric choice and refinement, we explored in some detail the general feedback from participating organisations on the metrics:

- Participating organisations found the metrics easy to use

- Further work will be required on both metric refinement, and addressing accessibility issues with the survey interface to, in order to facilitate easy and wider use by CYP and accessibility requirements *'there needs to be this range of metrics to track and improve the range of work we are engaged in.'*

- Some of the organisations noted that the metrics span issues concerning quality assurance and quality evaluation and any clustering of the metrics needs to give clearer guidance to users on the relative focus of different metric statements

- Participating organisations did not see particular merit in trying to significantly edit the current set of metrics to create a tighter core. Rather they recommended that we continue to offer a range of metric choices to users with user choice shaped by that cultural organisation's intentions for that event / activity. As one of the organisations commented

- Further development work is needed to create a wider range of art form specific suggestions for metrics. For example, one of the literature based organisations in this strand of work commented that they felt the current participatory metrics had a 'performing arts inflection,' and recommended that thought is given to working with literature organisations to develop some metrics that could be used specifically with literature based work.

- Some of the organisations commented that integrating the metrics into the participatory experience (for example Coney and Arnolfini) enables a better experience for participants (Arnolfini) and a better quality of response (Coney).

- Organisations actively matched and adapted questions to respondent type, with organisations asking matching and complementary questions depending on the respondent group in question

- Whilst the length of the trial mitigated against any substantive tracking of participants, there is significant interest in how far using the metrics, and a platform like Culture Counts, will allow organisations to track participants across the course of a participatory experience and thereafter.

- Some of the organisations noted that the outcome range captured by the participatory metrics would not only help project planning at inception, but could inform the criteria an organisation (and participant group if involved) uses for selecting the participatory artists to work on a particular project

Conclusions

As a result of this study we can now be much more confident that we have a good set of participatory metrics to pass on to the rest of the cultural sector for ongoing use and refinement. The development of the outcome clusters that the participatory metrics are measuring also feels like a significant step forward in terms of:

- Facilitating use and understanding of the participatory metrics

- Strengthening the role and value of the participatory metrics in enriching existing planning and evaluation processes across the sector

- Consolidating the alignment of the participatory metrics with the CYP principles

Our analysis has also identified a range of ongoing development challenges and opportunities around accessibility; enriching the metrics for artist participants and peers in terms of providing greater continuing professional development insights; supporting more formative evaluation activity; democratising access to evaluation; building on the potential of large scale peer review; and working with the sector to get the language right about evaluation and sector improvement. As always the generous engagement of the cultural sector will drive insight, debate and improvement, and a much richer understanding of creative intentions, practices, outcomes, and of course cultural value.

Fun Palaces

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Aims of the Participatory Metrics Strand

This piece of work was designed to build on previous Arts Council England (ACE) funded work led by Matthew Bourne / New Adventures.[1] At the heart of that scoping study was a desire to develop a new set of participatory metrics that would work for all types of participatory work whilst keeping in mind ACE's children and young people (CYP) principles to ensure alignment between them and the new set of participatory metrics.

Participants in that original pilot project regarded the resulting set of participatory metrics as a good 'starting point' (akin to the quality metrics after the first pilot stage in Manchester in 2012) but requiring further development with a wider group of cultural organisations.

The Quality Metrics National Test phase provided the opportunity for those participatory metrics to be further developed. This strand brought together a wide range of organisations to review, refine, and test the participatory metrics in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the original pilot work, and improve the applicability of the metrics to participatory activities. The core aim was to produce a refined set of participatory metrics that would be suitable for the diversity of organisations represented in the ACE portfolio and to ensure they aligned with the CYP quality principles.[2]

1.2. The Recruitment of the Organisations

This strand was designed to run completely separately from the wider Quality Metrics National Test phase which tested the quality metrics at scale. However, it was obvious at the end of the Expression of Interest (EOI) phase that was used to identify the participating National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) for the Quality Metrics National Test, that some of the applicants would either be better suited to the participatory metrics strand, or that some would be able to participate in both strands if they so wished (and that this overlap in cohort membership would be productive in terms of the insights those organisations could bring to both the quality metrics and participatory metrics strands).

Through the EOI phase, Culture Counts, working with Arts Council England, developed a short list of cultural organisations that were invited to take part in this participatory metrics strand, which also drew from members of the existing CYP network of ACE funded organisations. A number of organisations from outside the funded portfolio were also invited because of their specific expertise.

The grant agreement for this strand of work envisaged that a core group of ten organisations would focus on the participatory metrics and carry out testing activity on some of their work. However, because of the level of interest shown, the participatory metrics cohort was made up of 20 organisations (see Appendix One for the full list of participants), operating under two agreed modes of participation:

- Those organisations offering their expert views on the metrics who would attend the Learning and Insight workshops to discuss and refine the metrics
- Those organisations operating as above but who would also carry out evaluations using the participatory metrics and who would share their data and experiences with the rest of the group at the Learning and Insight workshops

The 'testing' group committed to using the participatory metrics to evaluate at least one event during the lifetime of the pilot and to feeding back to the group on their experiences and suggestions for metric modification / refinement. Under the terms of the grant the target number of evaluations for this strand was twenty, and we were interested to see how the participating organisations approached the evaluation of two broad types of participatory work:

i. Participatory work that does not produce an 'end-product' (performance, exhibition or show)

ii. Participatory work that does produce an 'end-product' (performance, exhibition or show)

In addition to the participating organisations, individual experts[3] who had been involved in the first stage pilot work on the participatory metrics were also invited to take part in all the workshop sessions although unfortunately they were unable to attend.

1.3 The Proccess

As with the Quality Metrics National Test strand on the Quality Metrics, the participating organisations were provided with logins to the Culture Counts platform and supported to carry out their evaluations independently.

All participating organisations were brought together in a series of meetings, which formed part of the following process flow for the work of the group:

i. Inception meeting / workshops in London and Manchester – at which the pilot project participatory metrics were reviewed

ii. Organisations were then encouraged to choose the metrics from the original pilot that were most relevant in evaluating their chosen activity, and to amend existing metrics, or create new metrics, as they saw necessary

iii. Organisations were supported to embark on testing activity

iv. Individual one to one calls with some of the organisations undertaking testing activity to discuss their results / reflections

v. Data interpretation and reflection workshops in London and Manchester to discuss the results and the implications for the metrics, their relationship to the CYP quality principles and their ongoing use

vi. Analysis and write up stage

vii. Editorial input from the participating organisations

viii. Confirmation of final report and publication

This report presents the key findings to emerge from the work of the cohort, covering: metric refinement; base line evaluative practice amongst the cohort; process integration and improvement; accessibility; formative evaluation opportunities; the language of assessment and evaluation; and recommendations for next stage development of the participatory metrics.

2. METRIC CHOICE AND REFINEMENT PROCESS

2.1. The original pilot participatory metrics set – reflections and observations

At the opening inception workshops the participatory metrics set generated by the original pilot study was shared with the cultural organisations and experts (see Figure 1 below). They were asked to consider the following questions:

- What's missing?
- Are there any metrics we can lose?
- Is it possible to identify a tighter 'core' set alongside a recommended set of additional options?

To help inform that review process the cultural organisations were asked to describe their work and the types of event that they were hoping to evaluate using the participatory metrics. This was so that the group as a whole could get a sense of:

- The types of participation projects that would be evaluated
- Who the participants were going to be
- The forms their participation will take

Whilst there was clearly a very broad range and spectrum of participatory arts practice represented by the group, nearly all of the organisations were engaged in activity that fell within a definition of participatory work that envisages an artist working with at least one other person to take part in a process that the artist facilitates.[4] However, that was not exclusively the case. For example, Fun Palaces, not an ACE funded NPO, also took part in this strand because of their emphasis on maker led, non-professionally facilitated cultural participation.

Figure 1 - Participatory Metrics set from original pilot project

Enjoyment	I had a good time
Intensity	I felt deeply involved in the process
Clarity	I was clear about what we were all here to do
Organisation	The project was well organised
Responsiveness	The organisers responded well to the needs of the group
Respect	I was treated as an equal
Voice	My ideas were taken seriously
Contribution	I felt like my contribution mattered
Authenticity	It felt like a real artistic experience
Support	People in the group supported each other
Belonging	They made me feel part of the team
Feedback	I got helpful feedback
Acceptance	I felt like I could be myself
Experimenting	I felt comfortable trying new things
Achievement	I was amazed by what we achieved
Stretch	I did something I didn't know I was capable of
Skills	I gained new skills (OR alternative question on artistic skills)
Artistic skills	I improved my artistic skills
Creativity	I feel more able to express myself creatively
Empathy	It helped me understand other people's points of view
Worldview	It helped me understand something new about the world
Friendship	I felt close to other people involved in the project
New people	I got to know people who are different to me
Motivation	I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future
Confidence	I feel more confident about doing new things
Opportunity	The project opened up new opportunities for me
Welcome	They helped me to feel part of XXXXX (company/project/ community group name)

OPEN TEXT questions

What three words best describe how you felt about it?

Will you do anything different as a result of this experience?

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4 See Helix Arts, Toby Lowe (2012.3) 'A Quality Framework for Helix Arts' Participatory Practice'

It was stressed to all the cultural organisations who would be evaluating a participatory event that they were free to choose which of the metrics they wanted to use, and to suggest alternative / additional metrics that they felt they needed to capture the quality of the participatory experience they were offering.

Therefore, in terms of ongoing metric refinement those metrics choices and additions would provide a good indication about which of the original participatory metrics were working well for the majority of participatory projects, and help identify any weaknesses or gaps.

The aim was to not only improve the metrics and check their alignment with the quality principles (see Figure 2), but also to analyse the extent to which they were grouping together in natural clusters, in terms of which aspects of the participatory process and associated outcomes they were measuring.

Understandably, the response of the cultural organisations to these opening questions on the metrics developed in an iterative way, and this report offers up an overall analysis of the insights generated rather than a chronological and verbatim account of the views of the organisations at different stages of the process.

3. Current evaluation processes amongst the cohort

3.1. Sophistication of Existing Evaluation Frameworks

Judging from the cohort of cultural organisations taking part in this strand of work it would seem that cultural organisations with highly developed practice around participatory work invariably have very well developed evaluation models in place that they are using to review the success of that work, both at a process level (e.g. Did we pick the right artist? Was the activity well designed and specified?); and an outcome level (the intended outcomes they wanted the activity to provide for participants e.g. confidence; skills; creative expression).

For example, Helix Arts, one of the participating organisations, already work within a very well developed quality framework for their participatory practice.[5] They have well developed self-assessment processes addressing how effectively they have 'created the right space' for the work to operate successfully, and how successfully they have supported the artists' practice around creating particular experiences for a set of participants. As their framework notes:

'Quality in ...participatory arts would therefore seem to require an initial assessment of the quality of space that was created. This is the base on which effective artists practice can be built, then we can engage in a critical conversation about the creative process employed by the artist.' (2012.9)

5 Helix Arts, Toby Lowe (2012) 'A Quality Framework for Helix Arts' Participatory Practice'

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For Helix Arts, and other cultural organisations in this strand of work, the metrics were inviting them to generate data on participant and peer views in a more detailed and systematic way than they had done previously. In other words, the shift was from a largely self-reflective process, to a more 360° view of the process and outcomes. As Samantha Jones from Helix Arts noted:

> *'We welcome the potential for the participant experience to be properly evaluated and brought together with the view of the artists.'*

What also became clear is that this posed particular integration challenges for the cultural organisations taking part.

Figure 2: The CYP Quality Principles

CYP QUALITY PRINCIPLES

1. Striving for excellence and innovation
 'Is there a real commitment to achieving excellence by, with and for CYP?'

2. Being authentic
'Is it authentic; is it the real thing?'

3. Being exciting, inspiring and engaging
'Are children and young people excited, engaged and inspired?'

4. Ensuring a positive & inclusive experience
'Do children and young people have a positive and inclusive experience?'

5. Actively involving CYP
'Are children and young people actively involved?'

6. Enabling personal progression
'Do children and young people progress and know where to go next?'

7. Developing belonging and ownership
'Do children and young people feel they belong and that it belongs to them?'

3.2. The Integration Challenge in Evaluation Design & Planning

Unsurprisingly perhaps, the well-developed evaluation frameworks being used by the participating organisations meant that adopting and deploying the participatory metrics for participants and peers raised issues of how best to integrate these new metrics within their existing evaluation practices. As Zannah Doan from Pavilion Dance South West commented:

'It took a bit of time to tailor to our programmes ... but it will be useful to replicate across evaluations.'

For example, the integration challenges here included using the metrics within multi-stranded evaluation approaches; or concerned getting 'everyone on board' with a particular approach to evaluation (such as the metrics) when a cultural organisation is working on a project with multiple partners who may have other targets and objectives that are important to them and that they were keen to measure.

The multiple delivery partner issue was particularly noteworthy in this strand as compared to the Quality Metrics National Test work on the quality metrics. This was due to the large proportion of the organisations in the participatory cohort working on projects involving multiple delivery partners. This had a number of very tangible impacts on the evaluation work.

Firstly, the participating organisations would have liked to evaluate particular projects but the very short time window for evaluations (effectively between December 2015 and May 2016) meant that it was not feasible in some cases to plan the evaluation and secure the necessary consent from all of the partners. Secondly, a number of the organisations noted that on projects that are very exploratory (effectively R&D pieces of work); and / or where they are working with partners for the first time; the process of securing consent, and engaging in detailed peer review, could only have been broached and agreed at the outset of the projects, rather than in mid-stream.

These observations raise interesting issues around how any set of cultural sector-produced participatory metrics can be used in a way that effectively complements existing evaluation practice, an issue we return to in our discussion of the evaluation results.

As is best practice[6] in planning evaluative work, dealing with these integration challenges at the design and conception stage of an evaluation (as opposed to the results and analysis phase) also had a number of benefits identified by the cultural organisations. These benefits included the following:

- Encouraging a more detailed consideration of the project's intentions and the extent to which the outcomes being evaluated allow for an accurate assessment of how far those intentions have been met (see comments from Helix Arts in Figure 3)

6 Harvey, J. ed. (1998). Evaluation Cookbook. Learning Technology Dissemination Initiative, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, http://www.icbl.hw.ac.uk/ltdi/cookbook/cookbook.pdf

- Relatedly, organisations noted that the reflective process in the selection of the metrics led by the producers / artists was a valuable process in itself
- Widening the frame of reference for self assessment and overall evaluation
- Prompting the evaluating organisation to ask themselves, 'are we asking too many questions?'

Figure 3: Helix Arts – Creative Intention Reflections

The participatory metrics offer a useful framework for uncovering how well project intentions have been met.

By translating intended project outcomes into accessible statements for artists, participants and audiences to consider, we have gained insights to inform future creative programming.

The process can offer a challenge to pre-conceived notions of success. The involvement of three key 'quality stakeholders' has enabled us to gather three hundred and sixty degree feedback about the quality of the process and art work. This helps us to 'side step', simply talking to ourselves about the quality of the work we produce, with and for, our priority groups. It has widened our frame of reference for considering quality - beyond self-assessment.

Samantha Jones
Head of Programme, Helix Arts

4. The Evaluation Activity

A vital part of testing and refining the participatory metrics was through the evaluation activity carried out by the organisations; exploring their metric choices and additions and their reflections on the results and insights on both the evaluation process and the metrics themselves.

Eleven cultural organisations within the strand carried out twenty-four evaluations. Appendix 2 lists the Test Event Calendar for this strand of work. In carrying out their evaluations the participating organisations innovated in a number of ways. Some organisations:

- Added metrics or tweaked the existing ones
- Worked directly with the Culture Counts team to identify what they perceived to be gaps in the original metric set and to come up with new metrics
- Used both the participatory metrics and quality metrics (where the participatory process led to a performance for audiences) (e.g. Ludus, Engage and Helix Arts)

- Used both the participatory metrics and the quality metrics (where the participatory and audience 'roles' were intrinsically combined) (e.g. Coney)
- Repeated their surveys at different events featuring the same content (e.g. Arnolfini and Brighter Sound)
- Adapted the response mode to the metrics statements for the young people they were working with (using unhappy to smiley faces as the response scale as opposed to using the sliding scale in the electronic survey interface)

Table 1 below summarises the headline figures for the evaluation activity within the participatory metrics strand.

The top three rows relate to self, peer and public (participant) responses to the participatory activities being evaluated using the participatory metrics. These evaluations engaged 316 participants in total, 15 peer responses, and a total of 16 self assessment responses. Fun Palaces, which are produced and led by their 'makers', feature in the 'self assessors as community artists' category (46 in total) – i.e. makers of Fun Palace carrying out self assessments.

Rows 5-7 relate to self, peer and public (audience) responses to the performances produced by the participatory work, evaluated using the quality metrics.

Table 1: Headline Evaluation Response Counts

RESPONDENT CATEGORY	TOTAL RESPONSES
Participants	316
Peers	15
Self assessors for participatory work	16
Self assessors as community artists (Fun Palaces)	46
Public audience for participatory work	34
Self assessor for audience expectations of participatory work performance	1
Peers – as audiences for participatory work performance	9
Total of all responses	**437**

4.1. Analysis and Interpretation

The sample size for this strand of evaluation is considerably smaller than for the quality metrics testing work. There is little analytical or editorial merit in presenting an aggregated account of the metric dimension scores for the evaluated work. Rather, we have sought to explore in detail with the participating organisations their feedback on the metrics and the evaluation process, and in turn the following key issues and questions:

- Metric choice and adjustment
- What are the metrics measuring?
- What are your reflections on the process – issues; challenges and opportunities?
- Formative evaluation opportunities
- What are the main accessibility issues?
- The language of assessment and evaluation

4.2. Metric Choice, Use and Refinement

At the workshops discussing their results and experiences, the participating organisations stressed to the Culture Counts team that we were only evaluating a snapshot of their work in this short study. They therefore counselled us against displaying any numerical frequency charts showing the number of times particular metrics from the original pilot set were chosen over others, as this frequency representation would not be a reliable guide to their overall 'popularity' or 'applicability' in all participatory circumstances. Any reported frequencies in this study will only reflect how the participating organisations judged their suitability to evaluate the pieces of work featuring in this pilot.

However, it is instructive to discuss which metrics were chosen from the original pilot set. If some of the original participatory metrics were not chosen at all across the 24 events this might suggest that those unchosen metrics are not particularly applicable to a range of participatory activities. It is also important to analyse how these metrics were adjusted and tweaked, and what additional metrics were developed and used by the participating organisations (showing up potential gaps and necessary additions).

Table 2 shows the list of dimensions chosen from the original pilot set of participatory metrics that have been used with participants and non-participants (peers / self assessors). The key headline here is that all of the original set of participatory metrics were chosen and used across the evaluations. Therefore, this wider testing process confirmed that the original set of participatory metrics are relevant evaluative measures across the broad spectrum of participatory activity featuring in this study (which will be representative, if not comprehensively so, of participatory work taking place across the funded portfolio).

Table 2: Metric statements used from the original pilot participatory metric set

DIMENSIONS USED FOR PARTICIPANTS, AND FOR SELF AND PEER EVALUATION	
Acceptance	Intensity
Achievement	Motivation
Artistic Skills	New People
Authenticity	Opportunity
Belonging	Organisation
Clarity	Respect
Confidence	Responsiveness
Contribution	Skills
Creativity	Stretch
Empathy	Support
Enjoyment	Voice
Experimenting	Welcome
Feedback	Worldview
Friendship	

Table 3 below shows the tweaked versions of the original participatory metrics set that have been developed by the participating cohort. As you can see from Table 3, organisations made minor tweaks to the metrics whilst retaining the key meaning and essence of the metric statements. This minor adaptation process is becoming quite an established feature of the way in which cultural organisations seek to use the participatory and quality metrics. For example, with the quality metrics, we frequently receive requests to make minor adjustments to certain metrics, in particular local impact (e.g. 'It is important that it's happening here' being tweaked to 'It is important that it's happening in this theatre' etc.).

Given the variety of participatory work it is unsurprising that organisations need to adapt individual dimensions into metrics statements that work for different contexts. The organisations welcomed the ability to choose from a menu of metrics that would apply to a wide range of participatory activity, and to be able to tweak, or view modifications of the 'approved' longer list of participatory metrics. As one of the organisations commented:

> *'it is useful to have a range of standardised metrics to choose from.'*

Table 3: Tweaked dimension statements used for testing

DIMENSION AREA	TWEAKED DIMENSION - PARTICIPANTS
Achievement	'I was amazed by what we achieved' Tweaked to: 'I am surprised at what I was able to achieve'
Contribution	'It felt like my contribution mattered' Tweaked to: 'I felt able to choreograph the dance performance'
Contribution	'I got helpful feedback' Tweaked to: 'I felt supported to reflect and improve my contributions'
Worldview	'It helped me understand something new about the world' Tweaked to: 'The activity helped me to think about other people around the world'
Creativity	'I feel more able to express myself creatively' Tweaked to: 'Sing City helps me to push myself creatively'

In addition to the metrics chosen from the original participatory metrics set, and any tweaks or amendments, we were also particularly interested in any new metrics that the cohort of organisations felt they needed to create in order to successfully evaluate their work. The new metrics produced in this study are presented in Table 4.

The range of new metric statements produced suggests that the first pilot exercise definitely missed some important outcome categories that cultural organisations are seeking to impact upon in their participatory work. The outcome areas that felt like significant new additions, as opposed to complements to some of the existing metrics, were:

Trust	'I trusted the other people involved'
Identity	'It helped me to see myself differently'
Intention	'I felt able to shape the intention of the project'
Creative Legacy	'I now have creative ambitions I didn't have before'

Trust and identity are clearly very important outcomes that could be at the heart of a successful participatory experience. The 'intention' metric is interesting, in that it allows the organisation to measure the extent to which the aims of the project were largely pre-determined by the artist facilitating the process, or whether those intentions could be actively shaped by the participants. Clearly, participatory work can sit at various points on that spectrum; at one end projects for which the purpose is to facilitate a creative enquiry for a set of participants, and at the other end of the spectrum projects in which an artist engages and works with a group of people as material for a creative process that they, the artist, defines. This metric around 'intention' allows organisations to capture where their participatory activities are on that spectrum.

Table 4: New dimension statements produced and used for testing

DIMENSION AREA	TWEAKED DIMENSION - PARTICIPANTS	TWEAKED DIMENSION – SELF / PEERS (3RD PERSON)
Trust	'I trusted the other people involved'	'Participants seemed to trust people involved in the project'
Intention	'I felt able to shape the intention of the project'	
Identity	'It helped me to see myself differently'	'Participants seemed to see themselves differently'
Creative Legacy	'I now have creative ambitions I didn't have before'	
Satisfaction	'I was satisfied with the experience'	
Understanding (by theme)	'The activity helped me understand and think about (the environment)'	'The activity will help participants understand and think about the environment'
Skills (variant by topic / content)	'I learnt something new about …'	'The participants will gain new skills / learn something new'
Appropriateness	'The activity worked well for the group'	
Unique event experience	'I couldn't experience this anywhere else' 'There is nothing like Sing City'	
New art form genres	'I am experiencing new genres and styles of music through Sing City'	
Goal (personal / project)	I met my goals	The aims for the project were met
Presentation (participant)	'I was happy with how the work was presented' 'I was happy with how the dance performance was presented to the audience'	
Audience (participant view)	'I was pleased with how the audience reacted to the performance' 'The audience reacted positively to the work'	

The original metric around motivation – 'I feel more motivated to do more creative thingthings in the future' captures something about the future creative intentions of a participant, but the 'Creative Legacy' metric is a useful new addition specifically measuring whether the participant has new or expanded creative ambitions.

The other new metrics deserving comment are those related to capturing participant perceptions of any performance produced as a result of the participatory process, for example 'I was happy with how the work was presented', and 'The audience reacted positively to the work.'

These metrics are useful when an organisation is not using the quality metrics to measure audience reaction to the performance but wishes to gain participant, self and peer perspectives on audience reaction to the work, or when the organisation wants to compare and contrast participant perspectives on audience reaction against audience feedback captured through the quality metrics.

In addition to these new metric statements, the participating organisations also developed and used a range of new custom questions (see Table 5) over and above the original open text questions:

- What three words best describe how you felt about the experience?
- Will you do anything differently as a result of this experience?

Gathering all these custom questions in a central place is a useful exercise in order to support the development of metrics. As this bank of questions grows we will be able to include the most frequently used questions in the dashboard, and group them under clusters and themes where appropriate. So for example with regard to Table 5, some of the custom questions respond directly to the participatory process or event (highlight; done differently?), whilst others refer to outcomes for participants (e.g. confidence; community connection etc.), and could be grouped accordingly.

The future potential to combine the participatory and quality metrics was underlined by some of the participating organisations choosing a number of quality metrics to evaluate performances arising from the participatory work, in which both participants, self, and peers evaluated the quality of the performance.

Table 5: New custom questions developed and used in the evaluations to capture the quality of participatory experiences

NEW CUSTOM QUESTIONS CAPTURING QUALITY OF THE PARTICIPATORY EXPERIENCE USED IN THE EVALUATIONS
How confident do you feel engaging with the arts?
How confident do you feel generally?
How connected do you feel to your community?
Were you satisfied with the experience?
Would you take part in the festival again?
What has been the highlight of your day?
How would you describe the workshop to others?

The quality metrics used were:

- Captivation: 'It was absorbing and held my attention'
- Challenge: 'It was though provoking'
- Enthusiasm: 'I would come to something like this again'
- Rigour: 'It was well thought through and put together'
- Risk: 'The artists / curators were not afraid to try new things'

Interestingly, not least as we hadn't encouraged the participating organisations to do so, they also picked a number of other dimensions that were available for them to view in the Culture Counts dashboard, under the themes of 'Place', and 'Reach'. They picked the following dimensions to also evaluate participant experience:

- Atmosphere: 'I enjoyed the atmosphere here'
- Collaboration: 'It connected other artists'
- Growth: 'It could appeal to new audiences'
- Platform: 'It has the potential to inspire other artists and artforms'

Finally, some of the participating organisations asked a range of open questions covering topics such as net promoter score (would you recommend etc.); have you visited before?; how did you find out about the organisation and event? These questions are common additions to evaluation activity using the quality metrics and merit little comment here.

4.3. Feedback on the metrics from the organisations carrying out evaluation events

In addition to metric choice and refinement, we explored in some detail the general feedback from participating organisations on the metrics. Overall the participating organisations were supportive:

- Participating organisations found the metrics and the platform easy to use
- Regarding the original participatory metric set, each of the metric statements were chosen by one or more organisations in the evaluations and only 4 largely new outcomes areas were identified through the new metrics created by the participating organisations. This would suggest that this piece of work has produced a good set of participatory metrics to pass on to the cultural sector for ongoing use and refinement
- Further work will be required on both metric refinement, and addressing accessibility issues with the survey interface in order to facilitate easy and wider use by CYP and individuals with accessibility requirements
- Some of the organisations noted that the metrics span issues concerning quality assurance and quality evaluation and any clustering of the metrics needs to give clearer guidance to users on the relative focus of different metric statements
- Participating organisations did not see particular merit in trying to significantly edit the current set of metrics to create a tighter core. Rather they recommended that we continue to offer a range of metric choices to users with user choice shaped by that cultural organisation's intentions for that event / activity. As one of the organisations commented:

> *'There needs to be this range of metrics to track and improve the range of work we are engaged in.'*

- Some of the organisations commented that integrating the metrics into the participatory experience (for example Coney and Arnolfini) enables a better experience for participants (Arnolfini) and a better quality of response (Coney)
- Organisations actively matched and adapted questions to respondent type, with organisations asking matching and complementary questions depending on the respondent group in question
- Whilst the length of the trial mitigated against any substantive tracking of participants, there is significant interest in how far using the metrics, and a platform like Culture Counts, will allow organisations to track participants across the course of a participatory experience and thereafter
- Some of the organisations noted that the outcome range captured by the participatory metrics would not only help project planning at inception, but could inform the criteria an organisation (and participant group if involved) uses for selecting the participatory artists to work on a particular project

4.4. Reflections on what the metrics are really measuring – clusters and themes

At the opening workshops, the participating organisations observed that some of the participatory metrics appeared to be measuring 'quality assurance' outcomes (the quality of the process), as opposed to other metrics that felt more distinctively measures of the participant's experience and development.

Therefore, throughout this strand we have sought to work with the participating organisations to explore 2 inter-related questions:

- Are the different participatory metrics measuring different clusters of outcomes?
- If so, would it be possible to group and cluster the metrics by outcome area?

As we analysed the evaluation results, and engaged in discussions with the organisations about their evaluations and reflections, it became clear that the participatory metrics are measuring 3 inter-connected clusters of outcomes, namely:

1. Conducive Environment
2. Experience
3. Participant Development

Figure 4 presents those 3 outcome clusters and the metric statements that sit within each, including the metrics that link the clusters together (in other words which sit in the overlap between conducive environment and experience, and experience and participant development). This mapping exercise includes the 4 'new metrics' generated by this strand of work on trust, identity, intention, and creative legacy.

Turning firstly to conducive environment, as we noted earlier, all of the organisations involved in this kind of work pay considerable attention to 'creating the right space' - a conducive environment for the work to operate successfully for both the artists and the participants involved.

We have clustered eleven metric statements within the 'Conducive Environment' circle as they are clearly measuring the appropriateness and functionality of those spaces being created for successful participatory work.

Put differently, any participatory organisation which scores highly on these dimensions can have confidence that they have created a conducive environment for participants and artists (notwithstanding the need for possible additional metrics for professional practitioners as we discuss in section 4.5.5 below). Of these eleven metrics, four of them feel like generalised measures of a conducive environment:

Clarity:	'I was clear about what we were all here to do'
Organisation:	'The project was well organised'
Responsiveness:	'The organisers responded well to the needs of the group'
Support:	'People in the group supported each other'

Figure 4: The key outcome clusters for the participatory metrics set
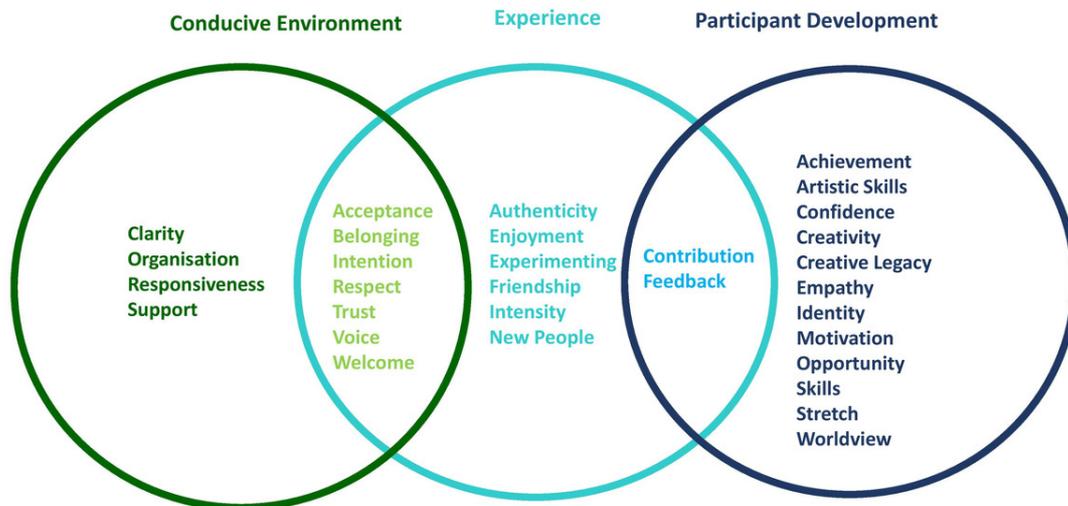
The other 7 metrics are also measuring conducive environment, but are more directly capturing participant experience (hence their position in the overlap between conducive environment and experience). The metric statements here are:

- Acceptance: 'I felt like I could be myself'
- Belonging: 'They made me feel part of the team'
- Intention: 'I felt able to shape the intention of the project
- Respect: 'I was treated as an equal'
- Trust: 'I trusted the other people involved'
- Voice: 'My ideas were taken seriously'
- Welcome: 'They helped me to feel part of XXXXX' (company / project / community / group name)'

The Experience cluster circle features 15 metrics in all. The 7 listed above are focused on the environment as experienced by the participants. There are then 6 metrics which are measuring something distinctive about the quality of the participant experience, namely:

Authenticity:	'It felt like a real artistic experience'
Enjoyment:	'I had a good time'
Experimenting:	'I felt comfortable trying new things'
Friendship:	'I felt close to other people involved in the project'
Intensity:	'I felt deeply involved in the process'
New People:	'I got to know people who are different to me'

The other 2 metrics are also measuring participant experience, but are also part of participant development (hence their position in the overlap between experience and participant development). The metric statements here are:

Contribution: 'I felt that my contribution mattered'
Feedback: 'I got helpful feedback'

We have clustered 14 metrics within the Participant Development circle cluster. The two above are also part of participant experience. There are then 12 metrics which are very much focused on the key development outcomes for the participants resulting from their involvement. The metrics statements here are:

Achievement: 'I was amazed by what we achieved'
Artistic Skills: 'I improved my artistic skills'
Confidence: 'I feel more confident about doing new things'
Creativity: 'I feel more able to express myself creatively'
Creative Legacy: 'I now have creative ambitions I didn't have before'
Empathy: 'It helped me understand other people's points of view'
Identity: 'It helped me to see myself differently'
Motivation: 'I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future'
Opportunity: 'The project opened up new opportunities for me'
Skills: 'I gained new skills'
Stretch: 'I did something I didn't know I was capable of'
Worldview: 'It helped me understand something new about the world'

Within this list of metrics there is clearly a sub-cluster around creative legacy, with the metrics for 'motivation', 'creativity', and 'creative legacy' being subtle variations on a theme around the future creative intentions of participants. We would advise users to pick one of those metrics rather than use all three.

Figure 5 displays these participatory metric clusters in a wheel, with a different colour for each of the three main categories, and the two overlapping categories – experience / conducive environment; and experience / participant development.

Figure 5 – Participatory Metrics Grouping Wheel
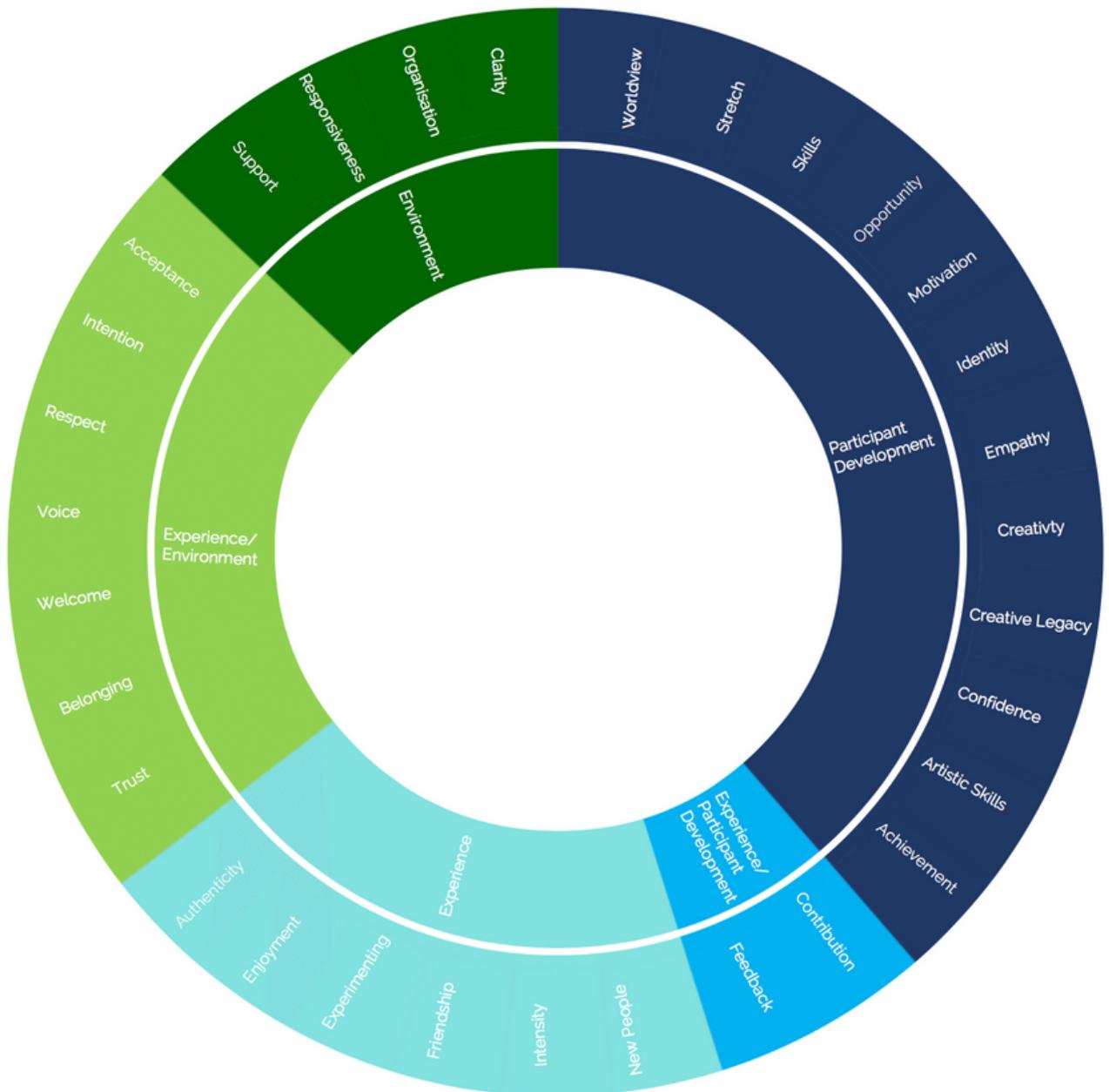
As we have noted, the participating organisations in this strand did not think we should publish a numerical frequency count of the metrics being chosen, as that should not be taken as an indication of which metrics are more relevant than others in measuring the bulk of participatory activity. Those judgements would need much more evaluation work across a broader portfolio of organisations. Moreover, all of the metrics from the original participatory metric set were chosen by at least one organisation for their evaluations.

However, it is still useful for indicative reasons to show (without a numerical frequency count) which metrics were chosen the most in this sample of evaluation activity across the 24 events. Figure 6 below represents the participatory metrics grouping wheel but with an outer ring. The darker the colour in the outer ring segment corresponding to each metric, the more frequently that metric was chosen in the evaluation activities within this study.

Figure 6 – Participatory Metrics Group Wheel and Frequency of Choice

So at this early stage in developing and refining the participatory metrics the following metric statements were the most frequently used across the evaluations:

Conducive Environment:

- Responsiveness: 'The organisers responded well to the needs of the group'
- Support: 'People in the group supported each other'

Experience / Conducive Environment:

- Acceptance: 'I felt like I could be myself'
- Voice: 'My ideas were taken seriously'
- Belonging: 'They made me feel part of the team'

Experience:

- Authenticity: 'It felt like a real artistic experience'
- Enjoyment: 'I had a good time'
- Experimenting: 'I felt comfortable trying new things'

Experience / Participant Development:

- Contribution: 'I felt that my contribution mattered'

Participant Development:

- Skills: 'I gained new skills'
- Motivation: 'I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future'
- Creativity: 'I feel more able to express myself creatively'
- Confidence: 'I feel more confident about doing new things'
- Achievement: 'I was amazed by what we achieved'

If the metrics are adopted and used more widely across the sector it will be interesting to see if this cluster of fourteen metrics, capturing vital aspects of 'environment', 'experience' and 'development', prove to be widely applicable to all forms of participatory work and therefore remain the most frequently chosen metrics.

Whatever the aggregate pattern of future metric choice, the participating organisations strongly supported the clarity offered by identifying the specific measurement territories the different participatory metrics are capturing. This represents a significant maturation in our understanding from the original pilot study, and has a number of benefits confirmed by the participating organisations:

i. In practical terms these issues of integration and complementarity need to be explored by users in real evaluation examples.

ii. Understanding that value range allows organisations at project planning stage to use something like the participatory metrics wheel as a sense check against which to frame and mould the aims and intentions of the project (or their detailed logic model if one is being used)

iii. To then use any resulting insights from this sense-check to inform the design of the project and its evaluation

The implication of this is that one of the key value creating elements of these types of metrics is their capacity to support and enrich existing processes across the sector - in terms of how organisations plan, evaluate and improve their creative practice, and deepen their understanding of audiences, and in this case participants.

It will be important for organisations to continue working together to help refine a set of reflective prompts and toolkits that organisations can use to strengthen their planning, reflection and improvement cycles.

So for example, if a cultural organisation was using the participatory metrics wheel at the planning and inception stage of their participatory project, we would encourage them to reflect on the following questions:

- Given the intentions of this project which of these quality outcomes are the most important in terms of the experience and future intentions of the participants?
- Given the intentions of this project which of these quality outcomes are the most important to us in improving our work?
- Which of these outcomes are the most important for the artists we are working with on this project, and for their personal practice?
- Which of these outcomes are the most important for the partners we are working with on this project?
- Are there outcomes important to this project that are not captured by the participatory metric wheel? If so, how can we measure them?
- Having agreed the outcome frame to evaluate our project, how do those outcomes shape the design of our participatory process?; our choices around the artists and creative partners we want to work with?; and the self and peer community we want to involve in creating insightful feedback on both the participatory process and the outcomes?

These types of planning and reflective questions emphasise that perhaps the most important value of the participatory metrics, and the wider quality metrics, is their role within a richer, data informed process, through which cultural organisations get better at measuring the extent to which they are successfully meeting their creative intentions with a piece of work, and how they can continue to improve their creative practice, and deepen relationships with creative partners, audiences and participants.

We return to some of the wider implications of adopting this type of approach to measuring participatory work in the conclusion of this report.

4.5. Areas for ongoing metric development and improvement.

The cohort of organisations also identified a number of areas on which to focus ongoing development.

4.5.1. Digging deeper into identity

Of the 4 new outcome areas identified in this study, identity was seen as a particularly important outcome category, but also an outcome that requires more thought and enquiry to refine potential metrics. How metric statements for this outcome are defined will also reflect the character and objectives of a particular piece of work. For example, one of the organisations noted that for a project working with people with addiction issues, capturing outcomes around identity for them may need a metric formulation which is very different from the metric needed to capture identity outcomes for a child in a primary school struggling with traditional curriculum based activities.

4.5.2. Empowering people to meet their intentions

Empowering people to meet their intentions was linked to a broader discussion about empowerment, and ensuring that the participatory metrics framework helps to measure the extent to which participation in cultural activities supports this aim. As one of the organisations commented *'art is the tool by which you are learning something else.'*

Capturing these outcomes is in part about having metrics that measure the future intentions of the participants and 'where it takes them next' (of which there are some in the current set). It is also about surveys being deployed at the beginning, middle, and end of a particular project, capturing how the intentions of participants might have changed during the course of the work. The potential prize here identified by some organisations was that if the metrics were used strategically / appropriately at various points in the activity, the reflection process and results for participants would give them *'a sense of control'.*

4.5.3. Integration and complementarity with other evaluation activities

If the metrics are widely adopted by the cultural sector, there will be some specialist areas of work that do not fit neatly within them, or at least the metrics will be measuring outcomes which do not reflect the main objective or intention of the work. For example, the Book Trust was part of this strand of work, and much of their work is focused on longer term behavioural change, such as *'changing attitudes to reading.'* They noted that in much of their work *'the key outcomes being sought are much wider than the participatory experience'.*

Or more broadly, a particular piece of work might be designed to produce a very particular outcome for the participants – let's say increased self-confidence - and in those circumstances the organisation involved might want to 'deep-dive' around measuring that outcome in some detail, and would therefore focus their evaluation efforts accordingly, with less emphasis on the overall participatory experience.

Pavilion Dance South West

Young Choreographers SW 2015/16
Choreographer Dan Canham
Photo by Kevin Clifford

In practical terms these issues of integration and complementarity need to be explored by users in real evaluation examples.

A few general comments can be made at this stage. Culture Counts as a data collection platform can be used to ask any question and generate data from a variety of respondent categories such as self, peer and public respondents. In many cases it is a very straightforward data gathering task to combine the participatory and quality metrics with other questions.

More broadly, this wider issue of how to integrate both the quality metrics and the participatory metrics with the measurement of other key outcomes is becoming a regular feature of user requests to Culture Counts. With individual cultural sector clients we have already discussed and encouraged the use of generic learning outcomes (GLOs) and generic social outcomes (GSOs) where appropriate to their evaluation efforts, and Culture Counts is working with the Library, Health, and Local Government sectors in Australia developing shared expertise on how to address these types of evaluation challenges, both in terms of using or developing validated measures for individual and community outcomes, and in terms of intelligent integration with the quality and participatory metrics, and also the 'place' and 'reach' metrics as used by some of the participating organisations in this study.

4.5.4. Enriching the metrics with art form perspectives

Another benefit that will result from ongoing use of the participatory and quality metrics will be the inevitable development of a wider range of art form specific suggestions for metrics. For example, one of the literature based organisations in this strand of work commented that they felt the current participatory metrics had a 'performing arts inflection,' and recommended that thought is given to working with literature organisations to develop some metrics that could be used specifically with literature based work.

The aspiration for the participatory metrics, as with the quality metrics, is to hold fast to a standardised set of metrics that can work for all, or most art forms, project intentions, and contexts. However, it is only right that as the cultural sector continue to use the metrics, different art forms may start producing a small number of art form specific metrics that they feel are necessary to comprehensively capture the value of their work. This is true for both the participatory metrics and the quality metrics.

We will continue to seek to facilitate this exchange across cultural organisations using the metrics. One of the most important aspects of the Culture Counts system is that it allows users, if they want, to share their results with other users of the system. So we would expect over time to see for example a dance organisation approaching other dance organisations using the system to share their results, out of which will come conversations about art form specific metrics and additions.

It is also useful to capture which questions are being asked most frequently, both from the established quality and participatory metrics sets, but also new bespoke questions by art form. As users endorse metrics through frequent use, this offers up the opportunity to consolidate them by theme (including art form). This is vital in building knowledge and expertise around evaluating cultural value across the sector globally; encouraging the exchange of views and data; and ensuring a lively, open conversation about what quality is and how we interpret the data arising from these types of metrics and evaluation approaches.

4.5.5. Evolving the respondent frame and corresponding metrics

As noted in the report on the original pilot work on the participatory metrics,[8] the diversity of participatory processes means that the respondent frame is potentially much more complicated for evaluating participatory work than the more straightforward self, peer and public respondent categories for the quality of cultural experience metrics. So for example, for a participatory process with a performance element, peers (observers of both the participatory process and the resulting show) would complete a survey on the 'process' (the quality of participatory process using the participatory metrics); and another survey on the quality of experience (product) using the quality metrics.

In this study the participating organisations sought to match respondents (self, peer, participant, artist participant) to carefully chosen metrics and / or metric adaptions and additions. They noted that the current participatory metric set was not measuring all of the experiential and learning experiences of artist practitioners involved in the work.

In response they have recommended that there needs to be further development work on the evolving respondent frame, ensuring that important respondent categories (such as artist participant for example) are modelled against the emerging participatory metric set and where necessary new metrics produced matched to each respondent category. This recommendation is equally applicable to the quality metrics and to the creative processes producing work that does that not have a participatory element.

The pilot report on the participatory metrics[9] had already identified the need for a set of metrics to be developed to capture the quality of the creative process for professional creative practitioners in addition to the broader scope the term 'participant' captures. In other words, a vital element of artistic / creative excellence is the quality of the creative process, as judged by artists and their peers (artists, collaborators and peers). Unfortunately, we did not have the resources in this project to focus specific development activity on this respondent group and outcomes. What needs to happen next to move things forward?

8 http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/CC_participatory_metrics_report_July_2015_FINAL.pdf
9 http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/CC_participatory_metrics_report_July_2015_FINAL.pdf

The original Manchester Metrics pilot study[10] suggested four outcome areas capturing the quality of creative processes: distinctiveness of practice; technical proficiency; collaborator experience, and quality and diversity of artists / workforces.

Table 6 maps the original Manchester Metrics group suggestions for metrics to capture the quality of creative processes, mapped against the current participatory metrics set. It demonstrates strong complementarity around collaborator experience, and major gaps in the participatory metrics around distinctiveness of practice, and technical proficiency for participating creative practitioners. In other words, some of the existing participatory metrics work well as experiential measures for both amateur participants and for professional creative practitioners taking part in the process, but gaps remain for artist participants.

As the cultural sector continues to use and refine the participatory and quality metrics, focusing in more detail on the experience of professional creative practitioners remains a development priority. Culture Counts will continue to try and support the cultural sector to innovate and experiment around these outcomes areas, and share the ongoing innovations users make in response. We will also give thought to how to improve our resource and support materials in order to offer good guidance and case study modelling of the different options for dealing with multiple respondent categories; and on how to define those respondent categories as clearly as possible, and on how best to deal with any overlaps.

Table 6: Quality of creative process outcome measures

QUALITY OF CREATIVE PROCESS OUTCOMES SUGGESTED BY MANCHESTER METRICS GROUP	WANT CREATIVE PRACTITIONER / PEERS TO SAY	COMPLEMENTARY / RELEVANT METRICS FROM THE CURRENT PARTICIPATORY METRICS SET
Distinctiveness of Practice	'Clear artistic authorship' 'Artistic Integrity' 'Influencing the practice of others' 'Willingness to experiment and take risks'	
Technical Proficiency	'High quality of performers....' 'High quality of product and technical staff' 'High quality of facilities....' 'High quality of producers and curators…'	
Collaborator Experience	'I enhanced my reputation' 'I was well treated' 'I was challenged and stretched' 'I felt safe' 'Felt a sense of artistic chemistry' 'I had freedom of expression' 'High levels of mutual trust' 'Great and clear communication' 'Inspired by the expertise of the people I worked with' 'A great learning environment'	'I felt deeply involved in the process' 'I was clear about what we were all here to do' 'The project was well organised' 'I was treated as an equal' 'My ideas were taken seriously' 'I felt like my contribution mattered' 'It felt like a real artistic experience' 'They made me feel part of the team' 'I got helpful feedback' 'I felt like I could be myself' 'I felt comfortable trying new things' 'I improved my artistic skills' 'I gained new skills' 'The project opened up new opportunities for me' 'I feel more able to express myself creatively' 'I feel more confident about doing new things'
Quality and diversity of artists / workforces working with / for us	'High quality artists/technicians, production staff want to work with for them' Other (output) measures Skills / CPD/ Diversity stats)	

4.5.6. Ensuring the metrics provide a rich professional development opportunity for creative professionals

These insights around the need to develop metrics that provide greater insights for professional creative practitioners taking part in these processes, link to another very strong set of recommendations for metric improvement.

The participating organisations felt that the peer process could be enriched, and that for some peers it felt 'too quick', in so far as the peers would have welcomed a greater opportunity to feedback and discuss what they had seen. As one organisation commented:

'The current peer process doesn't provide enough opportunity for peers to self-reflect on what they've learnt'

Clearly, part of this request could be met by cultural organisations engaging peers around the results and seeking further comment and discussion with them about their responses, and any marked observed differences between self, peer and participant response.

It is also clear that the participating organisations support the development of a richer set of questions for peers, most likely more open questions, with suggestions such as:

• What did you learn from the work?
• What will you take into your own practice?

We learnt in this study that practitioner networks, such as Participatory Arts London[11] regularly watch and feedback on the work of other network members in their meetings. These networks provide excellent forums to continue these conversations about what might be the best set of reflective, continuing-professional-development-type, prompts for creative practitioners / artist participants (acting as both deliverers of work and as peers to other organisation's work). Clearly, artists are seeking to be stretched and challenged as much as the participants they are working with and the organisations felt that the work is of better quality if both the artists and the participants are supported in this way.

4.6. Reflections on the evaluation process – challenges and opportunities

At the workshops for participating organisations we sought to explore in some detail the key challenges they had encountered in using the metrics and the Culture Counts platform, and also any particular opportunities that they think the metrics and this evaluation approach can open up for them.

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11 http://creating-change.org.uk/associate-members/pal-participatory-arts-london

The key challenges identified concerned applying peer review in some evaluation contexts; tackling accessibility issues; and getting the language right around evaluation. The key opportunities concerned formative evaluation; democratising access to evaluation; and accessing a wider range of peer opinion.

4.6.1 Challenges

Context shapes ease of peer review

The participating organisations noted that applying peer evaluation could be quite challenging depending on the character of participatory work being evaluated, and the character of the participant group.

For example, organisations talked about the inappropriateness of physically having a peer in the room (observing not participating) in some participatory settings, particularly with work involving children and young people. It is self-evident that peer evaluation needs to be sensitive to different contexts and that in some circumstances preserving the right dynamics for the process (protecting a conducive environment) would rightly trump any desire to carry out peer evaluation.

Accessibility

The evaluation processes highlighted a range of accessibility challenges that need ongoing attention, and the participating organisations also innovated in trying to overcome some of these issues. The specific accessibility issues identified by the cohort were as follows:

i.   Those with visual impairment would struggle to complete the survey alone with the Culture Counts interface as it currently stands
ii. Working with children and adults where English is a second language can in some cases pose difficulties in accurately understanding the questions
iii. Specific groups, such as those with dementia, pose very specific challenges. Organisations working with these groups noted that it is unsatisfactory to rely solely on carers for facilitating responses and can in some cases pose the question as to how other formats of measurement could be integrated?
iv. The survey response scales are unlikely to be clear enough for participants with ' complex individual needs'
v.   For 'early years' participants (0-8) the text base interface is not appropriate

Engage

GenART Conversation Booth artist Sian Watson Taylor
New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester, February 2016

In response to these challenges the organisations innovated in a number of ways. Coney used an interlocutor (in this case one of their actors) to translate and integrate the metrics into play with primary school aged children. Arnolfini adapted the survey interface into a scale of unhappy (strongly disagree) to happy (strongly agree) faces to capture the response of the children and young people they were working with.

It is clear from both this strand, and the wider Quality Metrics National Test work, that like other digital platforms, and text based survey interfaces, Culture Counts will need to work with the cultural sector to facilitate access as much as possible. Culture Counts is already working with partners on exploring different screen based response modes and other interface innovations alongside efforts to accommodate within the dashboard the full range of languages in which the metrics can be expressed.

The language of assessment versus evaluation

In a strong mirror of the Quality Metrics National Test work on the quality metrics, the participating organisations discussed their attitudes to evaluating their work and sharing their findings with peers and other organisations.

Organisations acknowledged that the use of standardised metrics could create anxiety around particular pieces of work being 'judged' in particular ways.

Clearly, these types of evaluation approaches will only thrive if the data proves insightful to cultural organisations, and they are encouraged and supported to explore the resulting data in ways that put the emphasis on critical reflection and improvement, as opposed to a narrow emphasis on 'audit' and 'performance reporting.'

The participating organisations talked about the importance of a number of enabling factors that will help build openness across the cultural sector to these forms of evaluation:

i.   To use the language of evaluation, improvement, and peer learning as opposed to the language of 'audit' and 'assessment'
ii.   To build understanding that the value in these types of evaluation is when they are a collaborative exercise, between the self, peer and participants (public), in which dialogue and reflection are vital to interpreting and gaining insights from the results. Organisations talked about how the metrics 'lead to useful evaluative exchanges'
iii.   That good evaluation is about asking good questions, being open to the answers, and working through with others what they might mean
iv.   The benefit of separating out process type measures (conducive environment) from participant experience outcomes measures, as a perceived 'good process' might not always produce the participant outcomes expected, and the metrics will allow that to be explored and improvements made as required.

4.6.2. Opportunities

Formative Evaluation Opportunities

Given that participatory work often involves sustained engagement with participants over a substantive period of time, and that experienced practitioners self evaluate continually throughout their work, it is perhaps unsurprising that an opportunity discussed at the workshops concerned the possibility of using the metrics and the Culture Counts platform to help facilitate formative evaluation activity in addition to summative evaluation practices.

Summative evaluation is after the fact, post event. Formative can be at any time (before, during, and after), the attraction being that formative evaluation that takes place during an activity can allow feedback to be immediately incorporated back into the practice so that the activity dynamically evolves based on the needs of those involved.

In practical terms, the Culture Counts platform is well equipped to support formative evaluation efforts, and that combined with the participatory metrics offer up opportunities to create valuable formative insights for reflective practitioners working with participants.

We have already offered practical advice on how this might be approached on the Quality Metrics National Test website,[12] noting that having completed formative surveys for self, participant and peers two interesting opportunities arise:

1. Organisations can gather self and participant feedback at multiple points and compare/contrast the responses feeding back into a reflective cycle in real time.

2. It enables organisations to track these reflections over the course of the project in a standardised way and to form an evidence base that allows for an evaluation of the effectiveness of any responsive changes that were made to the project in addressing the needs of the practitioners and participants.

This type of approach was particularly attractive to those organisations that are using developed theory of change models which lend themselves very well to deploying surveys at the beginning, intermediate points, and end of a particular project.

This rigour in the development of participatory work and evaluation is something we have repeatedly come across in the cultural sector. Supporting these efforts with a real time evidence base will, we hope, further enhance this high quality area of practice.

Democratising access to evaluation

The organisations discussed how the opportunity for training artists and young people in collecting feedback can further enrich the creative process and provide development for their own practice.

12 http://www.qualitymetricsnationaltest.co.uk/blogcontent/2016/5/3/supporting-formative-development

Toby Peach, an artist working on one of Coney's evaluated projects, shared with the group that he found it very interesting to connect with audiences and be part of this data gathering process by using creative opportunities to build participants into it and explore their depth of engagement.

There are obviously clear drivers to exploit this opportunity given that most participatory work is facilitated by artists in one to one or group situations, and given the safe space they create for participants they are well placed to carry out any embedded evaluation work, making the evaluation activity feel part of the creative experience rather than something dropped in or bolted on 'from the outside.'

The other opportunity here of course is to link artist led evaluation work to the ongoing development of metrics to capture their creative experiences, which we discussed earlier, and the quality of the process they were engaged in.

As the culture sector continues to use the participatory metrics, Culture Counts will work with organisations to continue to deepen a shared understanding of how best to train and support artists, young people, volunteers, and front of house staff to get the most out of the opportunities presented by the metrics for more dialogue and exchange with audiences and participants.

Fully exploiting the potential and benefits of peer feedback

As with the broader quality metrics strand of the Quality Metrics National Test work, all organisations in this participatory metrics study acknowledged that the completely new element of this study as compared to their current evaluation activities was the selection and management of peer reviewers. Encouragingly, many of the organisations reported that selecting and engaging with peer assessors was a rewarding process in that it enabled and gave them a reason to connect with other professionals who they wanted to work with and get to know better.

One of the really interesting innovations that emerged in this study, which also featured in some evaluations in the Quality Metrics National Test, is where organisations sought to invite peers to feedback on their work from different art forms and specialisations. As Figure 7 details, Coney experimented around their peer review processes in very interesting ways that in their view allowed them to gain a richer perspective of their work.

Coney's willingness to seek feedback from peers in different art forms in order to gain a very broad expert perspective on what is interesting in their work suggests that there might be real appetite across the cultural sector for a very rich cross art-from conversation about what constitutes cultural excellence, and for individual organisations to gain insights from a diverse range of peers and practitioners. This is clearly exciting in so far as it suggests that there may be a big opportunity to use the peer process as a way of greatly expanding the range and depth of opinions about the development of work across the whole portfolio of arts and cultural organisations.

Coney

Droves
photo by Natalie Raaum

Figure 7: Coney – Observations on Peer Assessment

The opportunity for peer to peer assessments was really important to us as Coney participating in a trial like this. It provided a rare opportunity for the full portfolio to collaborate, and to have a full cultural dialogue rather than specific to any artform.
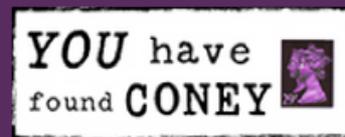
We are after all a portfolio, built to showcase the landscape of the arts within England. Individually we might be excellent, but collectively we are too and Quality Metrics provided a platform to identify this.

Coney used the peer assessment process to strategically build an impression about our work from the broadest possible influence. We approached assessors outside our region, and working in different artforms. And we provided assessments to others of the same, focusing largely on visual arts and dance events. It placed Coney's work within a wider cultural debate; understanding from those exceptional people in other sectors what it is about our work that is interesting, what resonates and what is translating as cultural excellence across the broadest possible scale.

We then strategically teamed these assessments with others who were more familiar with our work, in order to build a comparison about the role of prior knowledge, understanding or reputation in generating a professional opinion. What evolved was a rich tapestry of points of view to navigate and learn from.

I have curiosities about accessibility – and my fundamental energy goes into ensuring Coney is meaningful and relevant to the widest breadth of people with each piece of work that we create. But we innovate, we work with technology and we work outside of theatres and all of those things have their challenges. The Quality Metrics for us was an opportunity to compare how we're perceived on an industry level, from peers, against the opinions of our audiences and to learn where the difference lay. Thankfully mechanisms like the Quality Metrics ensure we can learn how to be celebrated by them both.

Becki Haines
Runner/Executive Producer, Coney

The large bank of peers engaged in this strand and the wider Quality Metrics strand (over 800 in total), is one of the very tangible legacies created by this project. There is clearly the opportunity to keep engaging with these peers and to expand that peer community over time if this type of evaluation approach is more widely adopted across the sector. More narrowly, it is very important that this bank of peers, who have been engaged in this way for the first time, see the outcomes of their involvement and are consulted about their experiences.

5. The participatory metrics and the CYP quality principles

The original participatory metrics set[13] that has been refined and tested in this project had already been shown to demonstrate a strong degree of alignment with Arts Council England's CYP quality principles. Given that the original metric set dimensions have been endorsed as relevant measures by the participating organisations in this study, with only 4 additional outcome dimensions being added, this strong degree of alignment remains in place. This project has also advanced our understanding of the specific clusters of outcomes the participatory metrics are measuring for cultural organisations, namely conducive environment, participant experience, and participant development.

Figure 8 maps those outcome clusters that the participatory metrics are measuring against the CYP principles. As Figure 8 shows, the metric clusters map very comprehensively across the seven CYP quality principles, with the participating cultural organisations in this study acknowledging that there was a good fit between the participatory metrics and the CYP principles. For example, if a cultural organisation is using the participatory metrics wheel to inform their project planning and are actively seeking to produce outcomes drawn from across the three outcome clusters, they will simultaneously be demonstrating commitment to all the CYP quality principles and to achieving excellence by, with and for children and young people. Helpfully the participatory metrics can therefore be used at both the project planning stage to sense check against the quality principles, and then post project to see how successfully those aligned outcomes have been successfully achieved.

Figure 8: Participatory Outcome Clusters mapped against the CYP Quality Principles
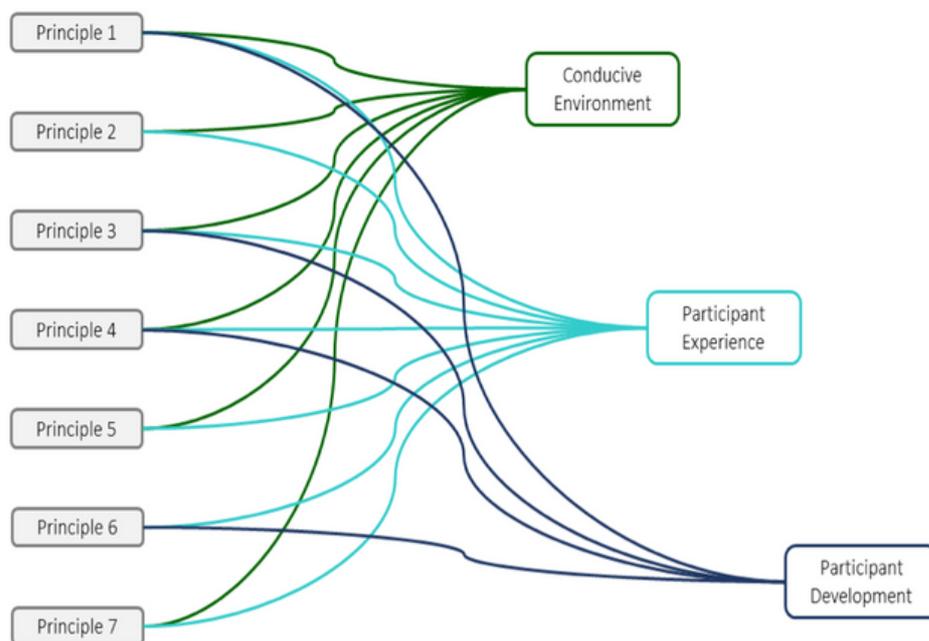
13 http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/CC_participatory_metrics_report_July_2015_FINAL.pdf

6. Conclusions

This study set out to test and refine the original set of participatory metrics created by the previous pilot.[14] The engagement of the 24 cultural organisations and experts has allowed us to explore in considerable detail the metrics themselves, their use and deployment, and how best to continue to develop them. As compared to the stage reached at the end of the pilot study, we can now be much more confident that we have a good set of participatory metrics to pass on to the rest of the cultural sector for ongoing use and refinement. The development of the outcome clusters that the participatory metrics are measuring also feels like a significant step forward in terms of:

- Facilitating use and understanding of the participatory metrics
- Strengthening the role and value of the participatory metrics in enriching existing planning and evaluation processes across the sector
- Consolidating the alignment of the participatory metrics with the CYP principles

Clearly, more work remains to be done in testing the metrics at scale, and identifying further refinements and improvements. Our analysis has also identified a range of ongoing development challenges and opportunities around accessibility; enriching the metrics for artist participants and peers in terms of providing greater continuing professional development insights; supporting more formative evaluation activity; democratising access to evaluation; building on the potential of large scale peer review; and working with the sector to get the language right about evaluation and sector improvement.

Culture Counts will seek to facilitate progress on all of these issues by working in close collaboration with the cultural sector globally. As with the 5 year co-production process with the cultural sector in Australia and England on the quality metrics, we can expect to see an ongoing process of active use and refinement of the participatory metrics, and other key value ranges and outcomes (social; health etc.), over the coming years. All of these issues around metric development are best resolved through cultural sector ownership, use and innovation as they work together to develop and refine the metrics.

As always the generous engagement of the cultural sector will drive insight, debate and improvement, and a much richer understanding of creative intentions, practices, outcomes, and of course cultural value.

14 http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/CC_participatory_metrics_report_July_2015_FINAL.pdf

Re:bourne

Lord of the Flies
Photo by Helen Maybanks

Acknowledgements

Appendix One: The Cultural Organisations and Experts taking part in this participatory metrics strand

Albert & Friends Instant Circus / Esther Gagne, Amy Scorgie

Arnolfini Gallery Limited / Gaia Rosenberg Colorni, Ellie Coleman

Barbican Centre (City of London) / Laura Whitticase

Book Trust / Kelly Walsh, Natasha Armstrong, Diana Gerald

Brighter Sound / Charlie Morrison

Collective Encounters / Mandy Redvers Rowe, Annette Burghes

Coney / Becki Haines, Toby Peach

Contact Theatre / Rachel Nutland, Keisha Thompson, Vicki Brown, Ed Cox

Darts (Doncaster Community Arts) / Helen Jones

Emergency Exit Arts / Deb Mullins

Engage, National Association for Gallery Education / Kamina Walton, Jo Plimmer

Entelechy Arts Limited / Theresa Veith

Fun Palaces / Stella Duffy, Kirsty Lothian, Hannah Lambert

Half Moon Young People's Theatre / Beccy Allen, Jackie Eley

Helix Arts / Samantha Jones, Catherine Hearne

Ludus Dance / Anthony Briggs

Pavilion Dance South West / Zannah Doan

Prism Arts / Catherine Coulthard, Bryoney Cartlidge

Rambert Dance Company / Tim Wood

The Writing Squad / Steve Dearden

Appendix Two: Participatory Metrics Test Event Calendar

Arnolfini

- Family Film Screening
- Family Space
- Family Story Telling 1
- Family Story Telling 2
- We Are Family 1
- We Are Family 2
- We Are Family 3

Brighter Sound

- I Live Hip Hop 1
- I Live Hip Hop 2
- Sing City

Coney

- Adventure 1
- Droves

Contact Theatre

- CYC Climate of Fear

Engage

- Conversation Booth
- GenArt Young Artists

Fun Palaces

- Fun Palaces 2016 (makers)

Halfmoon Theatre

- Dramatic Maths
- EY Dance and Drama

Helix Arts

- Stolen Voices
- Falling on your Feet

Ludus Dance

- Lancashire Youth Dance Festival

Pavilion Dance South West

- Young Choreographers South West

Writing Squad

- John Griffin TV Workshop
- Liz Berry Workshop