

**The Arts and Social Exclusion:  
a review prepared for the  
Arts Council of England**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In January 2001 the Arts Council of England commissioned research to explore different models of social inclusion work occurring in the arts. Eighteen arts/community projects are participating in the research and all have aims relating to social inclusion. A number of arts partnerships are also being brokered between established arts organisations and organisations with a trackrecord of working with disenfranchised groups. The range of practice included in the study stretches from community-led projects where the initiative for arts activity comes from local people or communities, to arts or community-based organisations with an established track-record, to that of established arts organisations who are relatively new to this area of work.

The research has two discrete but related strands. One strand involves projects working with an external researcher to evaluate their own practice and the second involves projects participating in an independent evaluation. Over the two-year duration of the research all arts/community projects will have participated in both strands of activity.

The overall objectives of the research are to:

- gather evidence which can be used to inform policy and advocacy initiatives
- develop and test appropriate methodologies for evaluating arts initiatives with aims relating to social inclusion
- evaluate different models of initiating and delivering projects
- identify characteristics of successful initiatives, as well as approaches which do not work, and the reasons for this
- develop measures of success which can be used to evaluate a range of initiatives

The purpose of this paper is to place the research into a policy context and to inform the design of the research. Topics of relevance include:

- the concept of social exclusion, its definition and measurement
- different methods and models of evaluating the arts
- claims articulated about the personal, social, educational and environmental impacts or contribution of the arts and the evidence that exists to support such claims

The first section of this paper explores the concept of social exclusion, some of the approaches agencies have used to 'measure' social exclusion, and sets the policy context which has led to increased interest in the role the arts play in addressing social exclusion.

The second section is concerned with theories of evaluation and explores the explanations commentators have offered as to why formal evaluation providing evidence of the impact of the arts in addressing social exclusion is limited.

The final section explores the claims articulated about the impact of the arts and assesses the evidence. It includes a limited review of social impact literature and aims to highlight studies pertinent to the development of the Arts Council of England research.<sup>1</sup>

## 2 SOCIAL EXCLUSION

### 2.1 What is social exclusion?

The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) was established in December 1997 with a remit to improve Government action to reduce social exclusion by producing 'joined up solutions to joined up problems'. For the SEU social exclusion is:

'a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.'

(Cabinet Office, 2000).

Social exclusion, according to this definition, is complex and multi-dimensional in nature and can occur when various linked problems are experienced in combination. Further, the definition supports a view that social exclusion can be experienced at a range of different levels; it can affect individuals, groups, or geographic areas. The concept is related to, but not the same as, poverty; the Community Development Foundation (CDF, 2001) explains this is because '...it draws attention to people's experiences of being prevented from being full members of society. Social exclusion is more than a material condition.'

Addressing social exclusion is a policy priority for the government that cuts across individual government departments. The SEU is located within the Cabinet Office and is staffed by civil servants and external secondees from a number of government departments and other organisations. Its remit is the wider interdepartmental work that has a close bearing on social exclusion; for example, the SEU has reported on truancy and school exclusion, rough sleeping, teenage pregnancy and neighbourhood renewal.

The term social exclusion is commonly used in the arts sector but not with consistency. The Arts Council, in *Social Exclusion: A Framework for Action*, agreed a definition that 'takes low-income areas as its starting point and focuses particularly on poverty in combination with other factors such as low educational attainment, poor health, crime and unemployment' (Arts Council, 1999). It is perhaps telling that the document noted that 'expanding access has always been an important part of the work of the funding system... Advocating the role the arts can play in addressing social exclusion is however a new departure...' as some organisations and individuals have used access and inclusion synonymously. More generally, confusion regarding what social exclusion actually is will impact on organisations' abilities to demonstrate that they are indeed combating or

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<sup>1</sup> Readers should note that the Arts Council will publish a complementary review concerned with the measurement of social and economic impact in Autumn 2001. It is also undertaking scoping work to develop its future arts impact research programme, which will explore the impact of arts interventions in addressing key social and economic objectives.

addressing it. Certainly research in the museums sector suggested that the ‘fuzziness of the concept social inclusion’ was reflected in a ‘lack of clarity in some museums and in some local authorities about what counted as social inclusion work’ (Group for Large Local Authority Museums, 2000).

## **2.2 How can we measure social exclusion?**

As noted earlier, social exclusion is a complex concept that encompasses linked problems and may affect people or areas. Allin (2000) has suggested that there appears to be some confusion as to whether it is people or areas that suffer exclusion, while Glass (2000) has posed the question ‘do we want to measure social exclusion or the effects of trying to combat social exclusion?’ (e.g. more or less social exclusion or more or less teenage pregnancy?). Quite clearly, people can be socially excluded, for example, because of poverty, and/or factors such as age or disability, even if they live in prosperous communities.

How to measure social exclusion has been the subject of academic debate and a number of different approaches have been devised. Most approaches have focused on people rather than geographic areas and some have attempted to include measures that take account of people’s societal exclusion or isolation. This review focuses on a few of the methods that have been developed to illustrate the diversity of approaches.

The Department of Social Security (DSS, 2000) is of the view that there is ‘no one single measure of poverty or of social exclusion which can capture the complex problems which need to be overcome’. The DSS recognised that there are complex, multi-dimensional problems that create a cycle of disadvantage. Amongst the problems it identified were:

- lack of work
- lack of opportunities to acquire education and skills
- barriers to older people living active fulfilling and healthy lives
- inequalities in health
- poor housing

The SEU’s approach to measurement has been to set out a broad range of success indicators against which progress will be monitored. The New Policy Institute also used a collection of indicators, 50 in all, which covered the subjects of income, health, education, work and engagement in community activities; together these indicators were intended to portray the key factors of poverty and social exclusion in Great Britain. The Institute has produced reports annually since 1998 containing updated statistics. The most recent report, *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion 2000* (Rahman, Palmer, Kenway & Howarth, 2000), suggested the number of people on a low income remained at an historic high and that low income was particularly prevalent among lone parents and young adults. Further, improvements were found in their education indicators and in housing indicators but there were significant and persistent inequalities in health, in access to essential services, and between different sections of society.

In September 2000, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation published the results of a national study providing detail about the material and social deprivation and exclusion in Britain. The survey identified four dimensions to exclusion:

- impoverishment, or exclusion from adequate income or resources;
- labour market exclusion;
- service exclusion;
- exclusion from social relations.

The research established that poverty rates, based on government low-income data, had risen sharply. In 1983 14% of households lacked three or more necessities<sup>2</sup> because they could not afford them. That proportion had increased to 21% in 1990 and to over 24% by 1999. At the end of 1999 a quarter (26%) of the British population were living in poverty as measured in terms of low income and multiple deprivation of necessities. The report suggested that there was no doubt that lack of paid work is an important factor in causing both poverty and social exclusion; however, even if full employment were achieved, poverty and social exclusion would not disappear.

For many, both inside and outside the arts sector, social exclusion is an elusive concept and difficulties in defining and measuring it have led some commentators to question its usefulness as a guide for policy. Glass (2000) suggested that there were various possible meanings of social exclusion and that practical considerations, such as the availability of data sources and the needs of research funders, tended to affect the meaning given to the term. However, he suggested this slippery concept has nevertheless been helpful in enriching social policy discourse and that a way forward may be to focus on explanation and prevention of social exclusion, rather than measurement and definition.

### **2.3 Social exclusion and the arts**

Some artists have always worked in the context of what is currently termed social exclusion (Arts Council, 2000). There are artists whose work involves engaging with groups and individuals who experience the problems commonly associated with definitions of social exclusion. There are also a variety of agencies, outside of the arts, that have recognised the valuable role the arts can play in supporting social, health, environmental, and other objectives.<sup>3</sup> There is, however, a lack of clarity in the definition of socially inclusive activity; for example, Allin (2000) argues that it is not sufficient for an activity to be socially inclusive simply by increasing access - the issue is whether or not such activities contribute to the outcomes of social inclusion and neighbourhood renewal. There is also the problem that arts projects can occur in centres within socially excluded neighbourhoods, but may not tackle issues associated with social exclusion.

*Bringing Britain Together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal* (Cabinet Office, 1998) described the concentration in poor neighbourhoods of a range of

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<sup>2</sup> Necessities are those that more than 50% of the population believes 'all adults should be able to afford and which they should not have to do without'.

<sup>3</sup> Examples might include regeneration agencies, health and welfare groups, social services, prison and probation services, community development agencies and local authorities.

interlocking problems such as high levels of unemployment, crime, ill-health, and poor education. Following its publication, 18 Policy Action Teams (PATs) were established to take forward work in key policy areas. PAT 10, chaired by the DCMS, explored best practice in using arts, sport and leisure to engage people in poor neighbourhoods, and how to maximise the impact on poor neighbourhoods of Government spending and policies on arts, sport and leisure.

PAT 10's report to the SEU (DCMS, 1999) concluded that arts, sport and cultural and recreational activity, can contribute to neighbourhood renewal and make a real difference to health, crime, employment and education in deprived communities. The team suggested this was because such activities:

- appeal directly to individuals' interests and develop their potential and self-confidence;
- relate to community identity and encourage collective effort;
- help build positive links with the wider community;
- are associated with rapidly growing industries.

Both DCMS and the Arts Council have prioritised action in this area. One of DCMS's departmental objectives is 'to promote the role of the Department's sectors in urban and rural regeneration, in pursuing sustainability and in combating social exclusion'. The Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team (QUEST) have developed key performance indicators to cover this objective, which have been accepted by the DCMS. They have been incorporated into their guidance to sponsoring divisions and non-departmental public-funded bodies, including the Arts Council, on producing Funding Agreements for 2001-4. These indicators are interim, and QUEST is currently developing work to establish a more sophisticated approach to performance management linked to the full range of possible policy interventions. The Arts Council has also named 'diversity and inclusion' as one of its strategic priorities and in the document *Framework for Action* identified five key strands of activity: profile raising; the work of Regularly Funded Organisations; evaluation; multi-agency working; and targeting resources (Arts Council, 1999).

*Building on PAT 10: the DCMS Report on Social Inclusion* published in February 2001 (DCMS) outlined the progress DCMS and non-departmental public bodies in the arts and sports have made with respect to the recommendations outlined in the PAT 10 report. One of the issues raised in the PAT 10 report was the lack of evaluation illustrating the impact of the arts; in response, both the DCMS and the Arts Council have initiated evaluation research programmes. DCMS has commissioned Leeds Metropolitan University's Centre for Leisure and Sport Research to undertake an evaluation of 14 arts and sports projects to identify guidelines for best practice. The researchers have produced an interim report and a full report is expected at the end of the financial year, while the Arts Council has commissioned a research project exploring different models of social inclusion work occurring in the arts.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Of which this literature review is part.

### 3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

There is an increasing body of research, documented case studies and anecdotal evidence that illustrate the impacts of the arts, some of which has been specifically concerned with the impacts of arts participation on individuals or communities that might be considered socially excluded. However, many commentators, such as Galloway (1995), have noted the need for even more robust evaluation:

'There is a huge amount of empirical evidence which shows the difference the arts make to individuals and communities. And yet there has been little serious evaluation; precisely because these social impacts are often long term and difficult to quantify'.  
(Galloway, 1995)

The PAT 10 (1999) report noted the 'lack of "hard" evidence of the regenerative impact of arts and sports'. The Arts Council (1999) document *Addressing Social Exclusion: A Framework for Action* suggested that there were many good examples of organisations and projects working to combat social exclusion but 'we lack the evidence to support this. Evaluation is taking place but on an ad hoc basis... there is a need for longitudinal studies and a coherent overview.' This lack of robust evaluation, however, is not confined to work related to social exclusion, but to the arts, in general. In fact, this type of work has been subject to more evaluation than any other work in the sector. The subject of evaluation is therefore pertinent to discussion about the contribution that the arts make to society, but also to current debates about arts and social exclusion.

#### 3.1 Evaluation in theory

Evaluation practice is characterised by many different models or paradigms underpinned by different philosophical and ideological perspectives; there is no one model that suits all organisations and situations. Furthermore, although terms such as aims, objectives, indicators, outputs and outcomes are widely used, they are not used consistently.

#### *The purposes of evaluation*

Evaluation for accountability is typical of much of the evaluation that takes place and its main purpose is to 'show others what we are doing and to provide evidence for judging, merit or worth' (Russell, 1998). However, others stress evaluation is a tool for personal and organisational learning and development, a view exemplified by Torres (1991): 'the objective of all evaluative work is to promote insight, and the ownership of that insight in such a way that it precipitates just and appropriate action'. Some commentators believe that the tension between these two approaches to evaluation mean that any one evaluation that attempts to achieve both is unworkable, while others take a pragmatic view that it is possible to create an evaluation that meets both needs.

#### *Different ways of seeing evaluation*

There are also different philosophical positions that will influence the evaluation approach adopted. The scientific or positivist paradigm has dominated evaluation and 'tends to get presented as the way of seeing rather than as just one way of seeing'

(Russell, 1998a). More naturalistic approaches to evaluation are underpinned by a very different way of viewing the world which believes in the existence of multiple realities and social construction of meanings. Some believe it is not possible to mix and match the methodologies associated with these different philosophical approaches but in practice many social scientists and evaluators advocate a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.

**Table 1 Characteristics of positivistic and naturalistic approaches to evaluation**

Positivistic approaches	Naturalistic approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>quantitative data (numbers and statistics)</li> <li>experimental designs</li> <li>a belief in a single reality</li> <li>an objective perspective</li> <li>the power and value of measurement</li> <li>the role of evaluation in achieving clarity and order</li> <li>the privileging of expert knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>qualitative data (narratives, descriptions and case studies)</li> <li>a belief in multiple realities</li> <li>value subjective perspectives</li> <li>see understanding as something different to measurement</li> <li>embrace paradox, and acknowledge uncertainties and ambiguities</li> <li>argues that values inevitably impinge on the evaluative process</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from *Different Ways of Seeing Evaluation*, Russell, 1998b.

### ***The cyclical nature of evaluation***

Meyrick and Sinkler (1999) described evaluation as 'an assessment of whether or not you have achieved what you set out to do'. For them, assessing success involves collecting and analysing data and coming to some conclusions about what is working and what needs attention. They identified five evaluation stages:

- setting aims and objectives on local needs assessment
- identifying indicators of success
- monitoring indicators
- assessing progress towards aims and objectives
- dissemination and action

Different commentators outline a differing number of evaluation stages, although Matarasso (1996) suggests the basic principle is clear 'you decide what you want to do and how to do it, before carrying out the work and assessing your performance against your original objectives'.

### ***The value of indicators***

Many evaluation texts stress the importance of devising clear aims and objectives and appropriate measures that allow you to assess performance. For some commentators, the process of developing indicators helps focus aims and objectives and provides a framework for collecting evaluation data. For example, Robb (1991) suggested that: 'Coming up with the right performance indicators is in many ways the key to developing

an effective and useful evaluation. It can also be the most challenging part of evaluation.... because finding performance indicators takes you right back to that difficult question 'How do we measure what we do?'. However, critics of performance indicators question their value, fearing that their use can lead to an overemphasis on economic and managerial definitions of performance as well as on goals, and also distort or reduce social phenomena (Russell, 1998d). They may also focus on aspects of 'early measurable' performance, such as hospital waiting lists.

Sometimes a distinction is drawn between different types of indicators - commonly there is reference to outputs and outcomes. Outputs are often described as the activities or services provided; the number of arts sessions, number of participants, details about participants, the number of posters distributed and so on. The outcomes are what have changed as a result of that work or the impact of activities or services. For example, Burns (2000), referring to the work of alcohol agencies, described an outcome as a 'change within the client themselves. For example...there is a measurable change in an aspect of their behaviour, or some aspect of their health'. However, there is no one universally accepted model; for example, Meyrick and Sinkler (1999) referred to process, impact and outcome indicators while Woolf (1999) in *Partnerships for Learning: A Guide to Evaluating Arts Education Projects* did not distinguish between different types of indicators.

What of unforeseen impacts? Woolf (1999) suggested that 'the interaction between an artist and a group of people is creative and dynamic' and that well planned evaluation 'can enable partners to notice, record and value the unexpected'. However, one methodological difficulty may be the lack of a baseline from which to measure progress. There is also the important question of to what extent short-term interventions such as arts events can be expected to change underlying behaviour.

### ***Involving participants and other stakeholders***

There is no consensus as to who should be involved in evaluation and the level of people's involvement. For some organisations, involving participants in evaluation reflects an organisational commitment to ideals of democracy and empowerment. For example, Meyrick and Sinkler (1999) suggested that evaluation of Healthy Living Centres should be in line with the ethos of community development work and therefore should be participative. While commentators such as Matarasso (1996) advocate an approach whereby stakeholders' are involved in defining and measuring outcomes.

### **3.2 Evaluation in the arts**

The lack of robust evaluation illustrating the impact of the arts does not indicate that no evaluation is taking place. Moriarty (1997) suggested that artists unconsciously use evaluation all the time, their attempt to 'do the next one better' is continuous and implicit and part of the discipline imposed in undertaking creative work; this 'first stage evaluation' is a self-referring model relying on a limited amount of information to reach conclusions.

Many organisations have more developed practices but the extent to which evaluation is formalised varies from organisation to organisation and from project to project. The motivation for much of the formal monitoring and evaluation that takes place in the arts sector has been to comply with conditions of funding (see, eg. Jermyn, Bedell & Joy, 2000). For funders and clients, therefore, the impact of the arts on neighbourhoods will tend to be the focus of evaluation only in circumstances where it is also the focus of funding (Shaw, 1999). Much evaluation is not published and while the findings may be shared with funders they are not disseminated more widely than that. One reason for this is that public access to evaluation which is intended to improve practice may also undermine organisations' ability to access funds, particularly if 'mainstream' work is not subject to the same evaluation models. Evaluation is prevalent in cross-cutting areas such as education, health, work with young people where there is often a requirement from a range of partners for more detailed analysis.

Coalter (2001) suggested that the relative absence of systematic evaluation of impacts might reflect the nature of arts work and a cultural 'resistance' among arts workers to evaluation. Similarly, Matarasso (1996) suggested that, except in the very limited context of funding relationships, the arts world has shown little interest in developing evaluative systems through which to prove its value internally or externally, seemingly preferring to state that seeing is believing. This resistance to evaluation is composed of many elements including lack of motivation or inclination, lack of time, lack of resources or skills, lack of understanding about the value of evaluation, and fears concerning the appropriateness of available methods.

Matarasso (1996), Moriarty (1997), Shaw (1999) and Jermyn et al (2000) have noted that arts practitioners rarely regard evaluation and monitoring as central or integral to their work and perceive evaluation as a task that is additional or secondary to their main purpose - delivering arts activity. Further, good evaluation requires time, resources and motivation but as Moriarty (1998) noted, in many cases there are no additional resources available and arts workers are left to struggle along as best they can.

Concerns articulated about evaluation include fears that it will fail to reflect the spirit of arts activity, stifle creativity or somehow reduce the arts experience. Moriarty (1997) summed up the wariness arts workers have towards evaluation as:

'...the anxiety that something very precious may be lost, that the complexity of an experience which includes relationship, enjoyment, learning, exploration, expression will be destroyed, diluted or reduced...'.  
(Moriarty, 1997)

There are also concerns that the utility of the arts will be overstated at the expense of less measurable benefits; for example, the Health Development Agency (HDA, 2000) review of community-based arts which impact on health and well-being noted a feeling that evaluation may set uncomfortable precedents in justifying art in terms of social usefulness. Coalter (2001) suggested that such attitudes may derive from the limited nature of current evaluation so often undertaken to ensure that funding has been spent

appropriately; such evaluations often involve output driven, volume orientated, performance indicators at the expense of more holistic measurement of outcomes.<sup>5</sup>

The lack of formal evaluation might be partly explained by a lack of in-house skills and expertise to conduct rigorous evaluations, by the funding and time implications of undertaking this work and by a sense that small funding grants are over-monitored. Certainly research in the museums sector (GLLAM, 2000) found evaluation processes were poorly understood and haphazardly carried out. Qualitative evaluation in particular was regarded as harder to do than quantitative evaluation, and lack of expertise and trained staff was an issue.<sup>6</sup>

The lack of evaluation of arts impacts also reflects the limited amount of attention this area has received in the past by policy makers. Shaw (1999) noted that the role of the arts has been more closely monitored in Australia and the Republic of Ireland; the respective arts funding systems made a policy decision to invest in the arts in disadvantaged communities and committed themselves to measuring the impact of that investment. It is only relatively recently that policy makers in Britain have prioritised this area of work and a strong impetus to evaluate the impact of the arts has emerged. In the education sector, for example, maths, English and science have generally been subject to more evaluation than arts. However, there is currently a lack of clarity at the Qualification and Curriculum Agency (QCA) about the aims and outcomes of arts education, which is exacerbated by the multiple claims about the benefits of arts education.

### **3.3 Challenges in measuring the impact of the arts**

Those attempting to evaluate the arts need to consider a number of additional issues, many of which are present in other areas of social research enquiry.

- **Clarity of outcomes:** Matarasso (1996) suggested that the first difficulty faced by many arts projects with social objectives is a lack of clarity about which outcomes are intended. It is worth noting that many arts projects that do not regard hard social impacts as a primary intended outcome of their work. Also, some organisations prefer to distance themselves from predefining what the social impact of their work will be.
- **Conceptual confusion:** terms such as confidence, social capital and community are commonly referred to but they are often used inconsistently and such concepts are operationalised in different ways.
- **Appropriate ways of measuring outcomes:** specific, clear and measurable outcomes may not in themselves reflect the complexity of social impacts. There are also difficulties associated with formally and objectively measuring certain types of personal impacts such as changes in levels of confidence or motivation.<sup>7</sup> Further,

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<sup>5</sup> Given the technical and other complexities of outcome measurement it is perhaps not surprising that people have focused on using information that is easily collected and quantified.

<sup>6</sup> The Arts Council and Regional Arts Boards have begun to address the issue of how to support higher standards of evaluation practice and equip organisations with the necessary skills and knowledge through the publication of self-evaluation guide (Woolf, 1999), a research programme and training.

<sup>7</sup> It is difficult to obtain non-self-report measures of personal and subjective constructs like self-esteem. That said, measurement systems have been developed in education and other areas of social research.

measuring progress towards ‘hard’ outcomes such as employment and establishing the transferability of impacts can be a challenging methodological task.

- **Lack of an established methodology:** the HDA (2000) review noted ‘there are to date no established principles and protocols for evaluating outcomes, assessing the processes by which outcomes are achieved, and disseminating recommendations for good practice to field workers’. This is equally true of the arts sector more generally.
- **Measuring progress:** establishing a baseline or starting point may be difficult (and impossible if outcomes are not predicted) as can quantification of progress. There are no absolute measures; individuals progress from different baselines at different rates. Further, different organisations delivering projects with similar aims will perceive and measure success differently making comparative analysis problematic.
- **Not all outcomes are immediate:** some outcomes take time to develop and will not register in evaluations that focus on the short-term.
- **Difficulties establishing cause and effect:** to what extent can an impact be attributed to participation in an arts programme or were there other factors at play? There are further issues concerning whether such outcomes might also have been produced through participation in other activities (arts activities may have an impact for some people, whereas sports activities may be better for others.) or might have occurred anyway.
- **Measuring the effect of multiple interventions:** Can one event or activity really contribute to combating social exclusion or do we need to consider the contribution of multiple interventions? For example, opportunities to participate in both the arts and sports may help to address social exclusion.
- **Sensitivity of evaluation:** evaluation must be sensitively conducted and appropriate for use with the groups concerned.<sup>8</sup> For example, certain methods may undermine the self-determination projects seek to encourage, or be inappropriate for projects that have a democratic/participatory ethos. There are also ethical issues about whether it is right to seek to produce change in another person without their informed consent and around safeguarding individuals’ interests (Matarasso, 1996).<sup>9</sup>
- **Determination of benefits:** who determines the benefits, and which benefits are considered valid - actual or perceived, will vary from project to project, depending, not only, on the purpose of the evaluation and the aims of the project, but also on the context in which it takes place.

## 4 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ARTS

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<sup>8</sup> Inappropriate evaluation could undermine the aims of a project. Shaw (1999) outlines the following scenario: by asking project participants whether they feel more self confident as a result of taking part one may suggest that the person was considered to be lacking confidence in the first place.

<sup>9</sup> However, it might be argued that ‘informed consent’ in the context of agreeing intended outcomes places pressure on participants to ‘achieve’ and may have negative consequences if participants ‘fail’.

#### 4.1 The literature

There has been growing policy and research interest in the social impact of the arts; more recently the focus of attention has been on the contribution of the arts to neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion.

This review focuses on literature concerned with the social impact of the arts as well as research concerned with the arts and social inclusion. The purpose of the exercise, first and foremost, is to inform the development of the Arts Council research project and it should not be regarded as an exhaustive review of all research in this area.<sup>10</sup> Much of the existing social impact research is not concerned with social exclusion per se,<sup>11</sup> however it is included here because the methodologies adopted and outcomes identified are relevant to the Arts Council study.

The literature can be divided into three main categories:

- published and unpublished literature reviews (e.g. Shaw, 1999; HDA, 2000; Blake Stephenson Ltd, 2000; Coalter, 2001);
- research exploring the impacts of participation in arts programmes (Williams, 1996; Matarasso, 1997; Moriarty, 1998; Hill & Moriarty, 2001); and
- research into the effects of the arts in specific settings or contexts (for example the arts in education, in health, in prisons, in regeneration etc).

Coalter (2001) in *Realising the Potential, the Case for Cultural Services* assessed the claims made about the arts' contribution to a broad range of social objectives and suggested that while there was a range of evidence concerning the social impact of the arts, the quality and reliability of that evidence was variable. Social impact literature has only emerged in the last five or so years and many issues have yet to be fully explored: how the concept of social inclusion or exclusion is related to arts impacts; the transferable effects of arts participation; development of more rigorous methods for assessing the acquisition of skills, self confidence, self esteem and other impacts; the long term effects of arts participation; the factors that influence the effectiveness of such activity.

In Britain, Comedia has been particularly active in its attempts to demonstrate the impact of the arts. Their publication *Art of Regeneration* (Landry, Matarasso et al, 1996) presented 15 case studies and explored issues around the use of arts and culture in regeneration programmes. The authors highlighted a range of benefits arising from cultural programmes including many, such as social cohesion and local image, that have gone on to be central themes in their later work. Another Comedia publication, *Use or Ornament?* (Matarasso, 1997) focused on the impact of participation in arts programmes and spawned a second generation of studies that were similar in scope and used similar research approaches. The overall conclusions of *Use or Ornament?* were that participation in the arts led to social benefits, that the benefits were integral to the act of

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<sup>10</sup> The Arts Council of England is currently conducting a review which focuses in greater detail on literature concerned with measuring the social and economic impact of the arts.

<sup>11</sup> For example, concern was expressed at an Arts Research Digest Ltd seminar held in June 2000, *Measuring the Impact of Culture*, that social impact research had tended to become confused with research into the role of the arts in addressing social exclusion.

participation, that social impacts were complex but understandable, and that they could be assessed and planned for.

There is also a body of work concerned with the arts in educational settings which is relevant. For example, a review concerned with research literature on the effects of arts teaching and learning identified 22 studies and reviews, only one of which originated in the UK (Sharp et al. 1998). Since the review was conducted the results of a major study conducted in the UK exploring the effects and effectiveness of the arts has been published (Harland et al. 2000). The research in this field is characterised by a more empiricist methodological approach than that exhibited in the more generalist field of social impact arts research. Research on the effects of the arts is also being conducted in the context of arts and health or social capital.

#### **4.2 The effects of the arts**

Policy makers, arts practitioners and researchers have suggested that participation in arts activity can result in a broad range of positive effects; these range from increased self-confidence to increased educational attainment, from social cohesion to reduced offending behaviour. The claimed positive effects of arts participation have been categorised and labelled in many different ways, definitions of concepts are missing, and certainly the practical application of concepts such as social cohesion often vary.

**Table 2 Selection of claimed impacts of the arts**

<b>Claimed impacts of the arts</b>
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- develops self-confidence and self-esteem
- increases creativity and thinking skills
- improves skills in planning and organising activities
- improves communication of ideas and information
- raises or enhances educational attainment
- increases appreciation of arts
- creates social capital
- strengthens communities
- develops community identity
- decreases social isolation
- improves understanding of different cultures
- enhances social cohesion
- promotes interest in the local environment
- activates social change
- raises public awareness of an issue
- enhances mental and physical health and well-being
- contributes to urban regeneration
- reduces offending behaviour
- alleviates the impact of poverty
- increases the employability of individuals.

Source: Landry et al (1996); Williams (1996 & 1997); Matarasso (1997); DCMS (1999); Blake Stevenson Ltd (2000); NFER (2001)

Some of the claimed benefits derived from the arts, such as self-esteem, are primarily personal or individual benefits, while others, such as developing community identity, occur at a community level. It has been suggested that those participating in arts programmes may accrue some benefits (such as self-esteem or creative skills) directly as a result of their participation (i.e. arts + participation = outcome). However, there are also processes that are less direct and more complex and are dependent on achieving intermediary outcomes. For example, people may learn new skills and feel more confident as the result of participating in community arts activity, and this, in turn, may increase their employability.

Many of the benefits are interlinked, overlapping or even inter-dependent. For example, social capital is a term that is very closely related to social cohesion and well-being. Definitions of social capital often refer to the existence of, and participation in, organised networks or groups and less tangible items such as social trust, civic co-operation, reciprocity, local democracy and group solidarity. The HDA (2000) is one institution that has noted the development of social capital theories that place emphasis on social inclusion and connectedness as key determinants of health and well-being.

#### **4.3 Drawing conclusions from the evidence**

Tables 3 and 4 summarise some of the studies that explored the effects of arts participation.

**Table 3 Literature reviews or audits - impacts of arts**

Study and methodology	Impacts
<p>DCMS, 1999</p> <p>Following the publication of <i>Bringing Britain Together</i> PAT 10 was established to explore best practice in using arts, sport and leisure to engage people in poor neighbourhoods as part of the</p> <p><i>Method:</i> PAT 10, a group of Government officials and experienced practitioners, met four times; subgroups focused on specific issues (i.e. best practice, funding, etc); submissions were received from organisations; the PAT visited six arts agencies; research surveys explored existing literature in the arts and in sports. The final report does not contain much in the way of hard evidence however, it does include some case studies and presents views as to impacts.</p>	<p>A small number of short case studies provided as evidence of the positive contribution of sports, arts and leisure can have in areas of health, employment, crime reduction and education. Among the noted impacts are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• economic benefits (increased employment opportunities and equipping individuals with transferable skills)</li> <li>• self confidence, self-respect and sense of achievement</li> <li>• social, organisational and marketable skills</li> <li>• helping communities express identity</li> <li>• changed perceptions of area</li> <li>• build outside links for insular communities</li> </ul> <p>A key finding was the absence of 'hard' evidence of the regenerative impact of arts and sport.</p>
<p>Health Development Agency, 2000</p> <p>Focus on arts projects aimed at community participation, capacity building and regeneration, as well as those with health or health promotion objective.</p> <p><i>Method:</i> literature review; visits to 15 projects; drawing up of criteria for analysis (a); survey of projects (90/246 responded).</p>	<p>An overwhelming number of projects identified increased sociability (through friendship), self-esteem, personal development, confidence and the improvement of mental health as benefits of participation in arts projects. Evidence was mostly anecdotal – no projects had devised rigorous instruments of measurement.</p> <p>Many projects stated work had informal educational value via development of language, creative and social skills.</p> <p>Overall, there was a lack of evidence concerning direct health benefits but stronger evidence of the role the arts play in improving mental health.</p>
<p>GLLAM, 2001</p> <p>Focuses on social outcomes of museum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal growth and development</li> <li>• community empowerment</li> </ul>

<p>initiatives that have engaged with people at risk of exclusion or sought to address wider issues of inequality and disadvantage.</p> <p><i>Method:</i> interviews with all 22 GLLAM directors, telephone/face to face interviews with 25 project leaders, site visits to 10 museums.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the representation of inclusive communities</li> <li>• promoting healthier communities</li> <li>• enhancing educational attainment</li> <li>• tackling unemployment</li> <li>• tackling crime</li> </ul>
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(a) See appendix for listing of criteria used in HDA (2000) study – the criteria were drawn up following literature review and advice from expert panel.

**Table 4 Primary research - impacts of arts activity**

Study and methodology	Benefits
<p>Bowles, 1991 quoted in Shaw 1999</p> <p>Evaluation of a pilot training course involving 17 women in Dublin in which arts activities were used as tools for community action and social change, as well as personal development. Evaluation involved measuring the impact of the course on the individual, group and community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reaffirmation of self worth, skills and creativity</li> <li>• arts, organisational &amp; communication skills</li> <li>• self confidence</li> <li>• awareness of how collective, creative action can achieve change</li> <li>• awareness of community issues</li> <li>• involvement in community activities</li> <li>• ability to work as a group</li> <li>• spread of arts skills throughout community</li> <li>• community action</li> <li>• increased working within communities</li> <li>• more local control</li> <li>• local identity and cohesion</li> </ul>
<p>Williams, 1996 &amp; 1997</p> <p>Two-year Australian study focused on measuring impact of 95 community-based arts projects.</p> <p><i>Method:</i> nine case studies; survey of 198 organisers and 200 observers. Indicators developed to assess the social, artistic, educational and economic benefits of the projects (see appendix).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develops social capital</li> <li>• builds and develops communities</li> <li>• activates social change</li> <li>• develops human capital</li> <li>• improves economic performance</li> </ul>
<p>Matarasso, 1997</p> <p>Comedia study aimed to identify evidence of social impact of arts participation and identify ways of assessing social impact.</p> <p><i>Method:</i> case study research in nine UK locations, Helsinki and New York.</p> <p>Method: project visits, formal interviews and focus group discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal development</li> <li>• social cohesion</li> <li>• community empowerment and self determination</li> <li>• local image and identity</li> <li>• imagination and vision</li> <li>• health and well being.</li> </ul>

<p>groups with participants (a), artists and others, observer groups (b).  Participants' questionnaire achieved 513 responses, questions drawn up to form common framework of inquiry for each case study (see appendix)</p>	
<p>Carpenter, 1999  An evaluation of London Arts Board's 1998/9 Regional Challenge, a funding programme directed at the arts and socially excluded communities.  <i>Method:</i> analysis of self-evaluations, gathered evidence, and marketing techniques of six projects; four criteria used to develop a common framework for evaluating the quality of participative processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engaged audiences</li> <li>• sustained audience commitment to the work of projects over an extended period</li> </ul>
<p>NFER, 2000  Three-year study of secondary school arts education in England and Wales.  <i>Method:</i> questionnaires to 2000+ Year 11 pupils; interview programme with employers and employees; in-depth interviews with pupils, arts teachers, senior school managers; observation of arts lessons at five case-study schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• heightened enjoyment, excitement, fulfilment and therapeutic release of tensions</li> <li>• skills and knowledge associated with artforms</li> <li>• knowledge of social and cultural issues</li> <li>• personal and social development</li> <li>• creativity and thinking skills</li> <li>• communication and expressive skills</li> <li>• some effects transferred to other contexts</li> <li>• some effects on school culture &amp; the local community</li> <li>• art itself was an outcome</li> </ul>

(a) Details are not included in methodology although it is noted that they varied in their formality.

(b) In Batley and Portsmouth only. The idea was developed from William's study.

#### 4.4 Impacts on the individual

Increased self confidence is frequently suggested as an outcome of arts participation. It has also been suggested that participants develop creative as well as non-creative skills, such as communication or organisational skills. The attainment of these sorts of outcomes by individuals may represent progress towards harder social inclusion outcomes such as employment or education and are pertinent to this enquiry.<sup>12</sup> As Dewson et al (2001) notes 'while the acquisition of certain soft outcomes may seem insignificant for certain individuals the leap forward in achieving these outcomes can be immense for others'.

Most evidence for personal impacts is generated through small-scale surveys of arts participants and/or data gathered from observation or interviews. However, it is not always clear how qualitative data were analysed; for example is evidence extracted to support particular themes or was a more objective analytic framework used? Further, measurement of such a subjective and personal construct as self confidence is a challenging exercise and most of the existing evidence relies on self-assessment by a sample of participants.

Matarasso (1997) claimed personal development benefits derived from participation in arts programmes included self confidence, training and practical and social skills or going on to become involved in other community activities. The findings of a survey completed by 243 adults arts participants established that since being involved in the arts activities 84% felt more confident about what they could do, 37% decided to take up training or a course, 80% learned new skills (Matarasso, 1997).

Commentators have noted that raised self-confidence in individuals can manifest itself in different ways. For example, Hill and Moriarty's (2001) report about the Merseyside ACME Access and Participation programme<sup>13</sup> noted the results of increases in confidence and self esteem ranged from 'individuals using arts projects as a stepping stone into pre-vocational education' to 'individuals using arts projects as a stepping stone into employment'. The authors suggest local people gave considerable voluntary time and energy to managing and organising arts projects and that participation in arts activities 'seemed to support an attitude of 'what's next?' in individuals, which encouraged both personal development and wider involvement in their local community.' Matarasso (1998) also suggested that in many cases questions of confidence went beyond the arts: 'where people became involved in the organisation of events they spoke of a new found confidence in their abilities to make things happen in the community'.

The core idea behind the notion of human capital is that developments in people's education, skills and attributes can increase their personal or collective effectiveness. This may contribute to progression towards key social inclusion outcomes. Williams' study (1997) makes a case that the community-based arts projects included in her Australian study were catalysts for experiential learning. The generation of human capital was

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<sup>12</sup> For example, there is a body of employment-related research that is concerned with developing ways of demonstrating achievements such as self-confidence, motivation, attendance, social skills and so on which represent increases in 'employability'. (See Dewson et al, 2001).

<sup>13</sup> The programme encouraged and supported over 120 arts-led community regeneration projects.

indicated through improved communication skills, increased ability to plan and organise, increased problem solving skills, improved ability to collect, organise and analyse information and developed creative talents. She suggested that the type of learning experiences that participants described were closely related to renewal, critical reflection and transformation experiences that characterise learning for human development.

A 1991 study of community development training course (Bowles 1991, quoted in Shaw, 1999) describes a pilot training course involving 17 women in Dublin in which arts activities were used as tools for community action and social change, as well as personal development. Evaluation of the project involved measuring the impact of the course on the individual, group and community. Individual benefits derived from the course were reaffirmation and evaluation of self worth, skills, creativity; increased arts, organisation and communication skills; and increased self-confidence.

Of the 90 projects responding to the HDA's (2000) review of arts interventions 91% felt that their work contributed to health improvement in the local area by developing people's self esteem and 82% stated that the same with respect to self confidence. However the authors described the evidence as anecdotal; none of the projects responding to its survey had designed rigorous instruments of measurement.

#### **4.5 The arts in education**

There have been a number of studies that have explored the arts in education and this section can only give a flavour of findings. The area is of interest because education is one of the key social inclusion outcomes of Government, and because often the findings of such research also relate to the acquisition of personal and social skills described above. Also, because this area has been the subject of more rigorous research than others there may be methodological lessons that can be incorporated into future impact research.

A review on the effects of arts teaching and learning (Sharp et al, 1998) identified 22 studies and literature reviews pertinent to their enquiry. The authors concluded the research yielded interesting findings that were indicative of positive instrumental effects on academic, spatial, and personal and social skills, however, overall the authors judged the case not proven:

'There is simply insufficient consistent and compelling evidence that arts education will necessarily lead to positive non-arts outcomes. Further the body of research into transfer of skills cautions us that such 'automatic' transfer is unlikely to occur.'

(Sharp et al, 1998)

The evidence concerning the influence of arts participation on academic achievement in terms of measurable outcomes of better scores in non-arts subjects, in particular, is inconclusive; certainly the largest UK study of arts in education found no evidence that arts participation boosted academic achievement in other subjects as measured by examination results at GCSE (Harland et al, 2000). *Arts Education in Secondary Schools: Effects and Effectiveness* (Harland et al, 2000) presented the results of a three-year NFER study that explored secondary schools arts education in England and Wales. The research

involved a survey of over 2000 Year 11 pupils, interviews with employers and employees, pupils, arts teachers, senior school managers, and observation of arts lessons at five case-study schools. However, that said there are some studies that have maintained there is a link between educational attainment and arts participation. For example, Matarasso (1997) cited a US study (Gardiner, 1996) which established links between participation in music and academic achievement. Gardiner's research found that three-quarters of five to seven year olds who participated in music and visual arts were at or above grade level in mathematics compared to 55 per cent in control groups. However, as with many other projects in this area, it is difficult to establish cause and effect and rule out the effects of intervening factors.

Harland et al (2000) established that pupils studying art, music, drama and dance accrued benefits including:

- heightened enjoyment, excitement, fulfilment and therapeutic release of tensions
- an increase in skill and knowledge associated with particular artforms
- enhanced knowledge of social and cultural issues
- advances in personal and social development
- development of creativity and thinking skills
- enrichment of communication and expressive skills

Further, some effects on pupils transferred to other contexts, such as learning in other subjects, the world of work and cultural activities outside of and beyond school. Arts education also had effects on the culture of the school, effects on the local community (including parents and governors) and art itself was an outcome. Harland et al (2000) maintained that many of the effects such as improved self-esteem, and personal and social development, are 'highly pertinent to the task of tackling disaffection and social exclusion amongst young people'<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, the HDA (2000) review of arts interventions that impact on health and well-being noted they have two main benefits in relation to education:

- people going on to become more employable as a result of the project, having learnt specific arts-related skills, which they then go on to use; and
- transferable skills such as discipline, co-ordination and so on.

The report also noted the growing body of opinion that believes arts projects' main value may lie in the fostering of emotional literacy, whereby people use art to express needs, frustrations or feelings that would otherwise remain unarticulated. Evidence of improvements in formal education were limited to one project where participation in out-of-school arts activities was linked with improved attainment at GCSE level among boys:

'it would appear that boys who had participated in the dance project for seven years were performing significantly better than expected, and bucking the national trend of under performance by boys in relation to girls at GCSE level.'

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<sup>14</sup> These areas will be addressed further in the Arts Education Interface Project commissioned by the Arts Council.

(HAD, 2000)

Part of Comedia's social impact programme focused on arts participation in education (Matarasso, 1997). Class teachers were asked to assess the impact of the activity on the development of a random sample of pupils with respect to language skills development, physical co-ordination, observation skills, creativity and imagination and social skills development. Pupils completed self-assessment forms appropriate to their age, teachers completed surveys and these were supplemented by discussions with pupils, teachers, artists and by project visits. Teachers felt there were significant positive impacts for a sample of 88 pupils, in their opinion:

- 84% of pupils developed creativity and imagination
- 63% of pupils improved observation
- 45% of pupils improved physical co-ordination
- 44% of pupils developed language skills
- 42% of pupils improved social skills

However, due to the small size of the sample and the subjective nature of measures used, a degree of caution should be exercised in interpreting these findings.

Shaw (1999) quoted a study conducted by Heath & Soep which suggested a link between arts participation and academic achievement. The 10-year study focused on 120 community-based organisations in 34 locations, and included only those initiatives judged by local youth to be effective and desirable learning environments. All were centres operating in impoverished neighbourhoods and fell into an athletic-academic, community services or arts-based category. A sample of 300 young users took part in the National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS) and the results were compared with those of a national sample of students who completed the NELS. The study found participants in non-school hours arts programmes were more likely than students in the national sample to report feeling satisfied with themselves, to say they can do things as well as most people can, to feel they can make plans and successfully work from them, and to say that they plan to continue education after high school. They were also three times more likely to win an award for school attendance and twice as likely to win an award for academic achievement.

#### **4.6 Arts and offenders**

Research focused on the area of arts and offenders is of interest to this paper because offenders are a group that might be considered socially excluded and because reduced crime/increased community safety is also one of the key social inclusion outcomes of the Government.

One of the most comprehensive studies of the arts in prison settings was conducted by Peaker and Vincent (1990). The research included a literature review<sup>15</sup>, a survey of arts activities in prisons in England and Wales and in-depth study of five case-study prisons.

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<sup>15</sup> An extensive bibliography is included in the research report *Arts in Prisons: Towards a Sense of Achievement* by Peaker, A. and Vincent, J. (1990).

The case studies involved interviewing prison governors and other staff, teachers and artists, and prisoners. Benefits were categorised as personal/therapeutic, educational, social, recreational and commercial. The authors suggest there was wide agreement between groups that arts activities were beneficial:

'They give individuals the opportunity to engage in creative activity, to explore their own and other's motivations and to produce valued and admired objects. Hence they aid personal development and may at times be said to be therapeutic. Some arts activities encourage co-operative working and thus develop social skills'.

(Peaker and Vincent, 1990)

Peaker and Vincent identified some differences of emphasis between groups of interviewees; those responsible for the smooth running of the prison tended to view arts as contributing to 'dynamic security' by providing positive and absorbing activities, education staff emphasised the education benefits, while artists emphasised the benefits to prisoners from the process and outcomes of creative activity, and the benefits they themselves gained from their involvement.

There have also been evaluations of specific arts projects in prisons. One interesting approach attempted to assess the effects of participation in a dance project on residents of a wing of a therapeutic community at HMP Grendon (reported in Peppiatt, 1992). A sample of community members volunteered to be part of either a dance group or a control group.<sup>16</sup> Prior to the start of the dance project individuals completed questionnaires which included attitudes scales concerning the group they were in. The dance group participated in a month-long dance project led by the dance company Motionhouse. The questionnaires were then re-administered to individuals at the end of the project. The findings indicated that a number of changes took place amongst the dance group that did not occur in the control group; for example, by the end of the project members of the dance group found it easier to approach others in the group, rated themselves as knowing each other better, had increased their trust for one another, and became more likely to take a problem to a fellow group members.

#### **4.7 Health and well-being**

Health is one of the key outcomes of social inclusion and therefore research that has explored the impact of the arts on health and well-being is of interest to this paper. For example, in 2000 the Heath Development Agency (HDA) published *Arts for health: a review of good practice in community-based arts projects and initiatives which impact on health and well-being*. The review was concerned with arts projects aimed at community participation, capacity building and regeneration, as well as those with health or health promotion objectives. A broad view was taken on how the relationship between art and health was articulated and on the importance of building social capital through participation and social connectedness.

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<sup>16</sup> It is not clear from the author's paper the extent to which the aims of the dance project were explained to individuals prior to its commencement (this could have influenced results).

The review stated it was 'impossible to give precise details of improved health, particularly in light of the fact that so few projects directly provide health or social information related to health based on formal instruments of measurement'. The authors suggested there was more evidence (albeit anecdotal), as well as a stronger indication that increased well-being/self-esteem was directly related to involvement with the art and not just with socialising or carrying out the physical activity involved. In case studies, improvements in well-being were commonly reported by projects to include enhanced motivation, greater connectedness to others, having a more positive outlook on life and a reduced sense of fear, isolation or anxiety. Further, such benefits were often brought about by the opportunities that engagement in art afforded for self-expression, enhanced sense of value and attainment and pride in achievement.

Matarasso (1997) concluded 'it was clear people derived great pleasure from being involved in arts activities and it added greatly to their quality of life'. He proposes that improved health and well being was one of the outcomes of arts participation; this outcome was indicated by people 'feeling better or healthier' or 'feeling happier'. <sup>17</sup> Matarasso suggested that three arts projects in particular made a very positive contribution to supporting mental health users and other vulnerable people.

Several studies focussing specifically on health and well-being are currently being conducted. One study, occurring at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, aims to produce a 'quantitative analysis and critical evaluation of the effect of the arts on patients, staff and visitors at the hospital. The research, based on scientific methodology and statistical analysis of measurements, uses randomised, double or single blinded controlled groups'. The research includes an evaluation form<sup>18</sup>, measurements of physiological responses taken from patients in the presence or absence of visual arts and/or live music, and tests to evaluate the responses of the immune system, variations in the level of some hormones, the stimulation of biological painkillers and the time of recovery of patients exposed to this integrated environment. To date, the data collected shows that 'two thirds of the staff, patients and visitors who have participated in the study have felt that live performances significantly help to take their minds off immediate worries or medical problems, diminishing their stress level and changing their mood for the better'. (National Network for the Arts in Health, 2001). Other work currently being explored by the Hospital involves collaboration with Architects for Health on an analysis of the design of health care buildings, and particularly, the impact of colour on patients' length of stay and drug treatments.

Two evaluation studies are currently being conducted through the Centre for Arts and Humanities in Health and Medicine <sup>19</sup> (CAHHM) at the University of Durham. The first is a two-year study of five community-based arts in health projects and is due to be published in the summer of 2001. The second is an evaluation of an Arts In Health

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<sup>17</sup> 52% of participants said they felt better and 73% said they felt happier since being involved

<sup>18</sup> Designed to investigate level of awareness, attraction and enjoyment of the visual and performing arts, as well as changes in mood, effect on stress and degree of appreciation of the role of the arts in healthcare.

<sup>19</sup> CAHHM aims to explore the value of introducing more elements of literature, philosophy, history and art alongside science and technology which tend to dominate traditional health care.

learning and development programme for the Tyne and Wear Health Action Zone 1999-2002 and an interim report is expected in the summer of 2001.

#### **4.8 Creating social capital**

Social capital has been suggested as an explanation for why some communities work better than others with resulting economic, social and health benefits (Earthy et al, 2000). It has been alluded to as an impact in some arts participation studies and identified explicitly as an impact in others. Interestingly, the Health Development Agency (2000) suggested that 'social capital serves as one coherent construct which will allow us to progress the debate and discussion about the general importance of social approaches to public health and health promotion'; its review of arts interventions which impact on health and well-being noted the development of theories of social capital that place emphasis on social inclusion and connectedness as one of the main determinants of health and well-being.

Putnam (1993) described social capital as 'features of social organisation such as networks, norms and trusts, that facilitate co-ordination and operation for mutual benefit'. Definitions often refer to the existence of, and participation in, organised networks or groups and less tangible items such as social trust, civic co-operation, reciprocity, local democracy and group solidarity. For the World Bank (2001) social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin society but the 'glue that holds them together'.

Social capital was one of the benefits identified by Williams (1997) in her study of community arts in Australia.<sup>20</sup> She suggested community-based collaborative artistic production, as in the community arts model, was a catalyst for generating social capital:

'The process of group artistic production relies on identifying common goals, group co-operation and effective communication of complex ideas. Competition is replaced with collaboration, and self-interest is counterbalanced by group needs'.  
(Williams, 1997)

According to Williams the long-term benefits that emerged from community-based arts projects were directly related to the impact of co-operation, trust and collaboration to reach common goals.<sup>21</sup> Although social capital may not be specifically referred to in other arts impact studies, many of the benefits that have been noted, such as social cohesion or greater understanding of other cultures, could be viewed as indicators of social capital.

#### **4.9 Community development and urban regeneration**

The Community Development Foundation (2001) points out there are connections between social inclusion and community development because 'people who are socially

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<sup>20</sup> See Campbell, Wood and Kelly (1998) for an overview of this approach.

<sup>21</sup> Social capital indicators used in William's work were: improved skills in communicating ideas and information, increased appreciation of community arts, improved skills in planning and organising activities, improved understanding of different cultures or lifestyles and improved consultation between government and community.

excluded are prevented from participating fully in society and community development seeks to work with people who are the most marginalised... Social inclusion and community development are two sides of the same coin'. Research has suggested that the arts have an important role to play in the regeneration of economically, socially and culturally disadvantaged areas and in supporting community development.

Arts impact studies have often identified community development benefits as outcomes of arts participation. For example, Williams (1997) suggested arts programmes and projects were highly effective in producing what she categorises as community development outcomes, namely, development of community identity, decrease in social isolation, improvements in recreational options, development of local enterprise and improvement in public facilities. Further she suggested that the process of creating or strengthening communities and developing social capital, frequently generated the desire for social change. Bowles (1991, quoted in Shaw 1999) also noted that group and community benefits included increased awareness of how collective, creative action can achieve change.

Matarasso (1997) identified 'social cohesion', 'community empowerment and self determination' and 'local image and identity' amongst the impact of arts programmes. He suggested that particular arts projects contributed to social cohesion in several ways; at a basic level they could help bring people together, but they can also encourage partnership, co-operation, and promote understanding of different cultures. A survey completed by 243 adult arts participants established that 91% made new friends, 54% felt that they learned about other people's culture and 84% became interested in something new.

Similarly, Hill and Moriarty (2001) found that project evaluations for Merseyside Access and Participation programme commonly reported that arts projects offered a safe space for exploration; a place where individuals from different backgrounds could meet and learn about each other.

There is also a body of literature concerned with the arts and regeneration. As noted earlier the *Art of Regeneration* (Landry et al. 1996) presented case studies and identified a range of benefits arising from arts and culture in regeneration programmes. More recently, Blake Stevenson Ltd (2000) conducted four in-depth case studies to investigate the role of arts-based projects and citywide partnerships, and to ascertain the long-term and sustainable impacts of arts-based projects on the regeneration of deprived areas and the promotion of social inclusion. The authors suggest the arts were seen to be able to operate in a number of different ways; they could increase individuals' personal development, improve an area's image, attract economic investment, help in the process of community development and lead to training and employment.

## 5 WORKING PRINCIPLES

Much of the research refers to the benefits of the arts and presents case study findings in a generalised manner. Coalter (1991) noted that this approach reflects a presumption that many of the processes involved in arts projects were generic, with similar outcomes being achieved, and that it ‘reduces the ability to identify best practice, understand processes and the type of provision best suited to achieve particular outcomes’. Harland et al (2000) made a similar point when they suggested that the term ‘the arts’ may be unhelpful if it ‘leads to policies which wrongly assume that the learning gains associated with one artform are broadly the same as those of the others’.

There is a danger that all arts programmes will come to be viewed as inevitably producing desired outcomes. There is however great variation across arts programmes in terms of working practices and principles, programme aims and objectives, setting, the nature and quality of the experience, the artist-participant relationship and so on. Outcomes are not inevitable or guaranteed and badly planned or executed arts projects can damage personal and community confidence and produce other negative effects (Matarasso, 1997).

The literature that has attempted to identify best practice principles underpinning the arts and social inclusion is often accompanied by caveats that there is no single winning formula. There is a lack of rigorous analysis of what works but several commentators have identified principles which, in their view, can influence a successful outcome.

**Table 5 Best practice principles**

<b>PAT 10 (DCMS, 1998)</b>	<b>Williams (1997)</b>	<b>Matarasso (1997)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>defining common objectives in relation to actual needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clearly stated objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clear objectives</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>promoting equitable partnerships supporting local commitment</li> <li>embedding local control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>group ownership, trust and co-operation</li> <li>meaningful levels of participation</li> <li>artists as collaborators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>equitable partnerships</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pursuing quality across the spectrum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pride in artistic achievement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>excellence</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>securing sustainability</li> <li>connecting with the mainstream of art and sport activities working flexibly with change</li> <li>valuing diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>degree of investment by other stakeholders in the long term outcomes</li> <li>degree of goodwill developed in other allied local or regional organisations and networks</li> <li>capacity to develop community leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shared ethical principles</li> <li>proportional expectations</li> <li>good planning</li> <li>joint evaluation</li> </ul>

Source: DCMS, 1998; Williams, 1997; Matarasso, 1997.

On the subject of good practice then a number of recurrent themes emerge from the literature, among them:

- **Connecting with local needs.** For example, the HDA's (2000) review of arts and health projects found that best practice clearly identified and articulated local need (though seldom through formal means).
- **Control, equitable partnerships and flexibility of working methods.** Carpenter (1999) in her evaluation of a number of projects involving the arts and socially excluded communities concluded that the more democratic the relationship between audience/participant and artist, the more successful the project appeared to be in reaching and engaging significant numbers of people.<sup>22</sup> The implications for practitioners arising from her finding include a willingness on the part of artists and other staff to share control with participants, and the adoption of flexible and adaptable working methods.

<sup>22</sup> Carpenter drew analysis criteria from theories concerning the democratic process (see appendix).

- **Project planning and resources.** The HDA (2000) review found all good practice case studies had sufficient time for planning, for building successful participatory methodologies and creating robust models for partnership working. Carpenter (1999), Matarasso (1997) and others have also highlighted the importance of project planning and inputting sufficient resources.
- **Quality, excellence or pride in achievement.** These are recurrent themes; indeed the HDA review noted that an anything goes attitude could be detrimental to a project's success.

However, there are also likely to be factors that might influence a successful outcome that are less easily identified and articulated. As someone commenting on a draft of this review said, factors such as creative passion, dynamic interrelationships, tough love, imaginative and unplanned experimentation, innovative problem-solving and so on may not appear on best practice lists but these factors need to be acknowledged.

There are also factors that may have a negative influence on outcome. Moriarty (1998) has noted there is an over dependence on a limited number of individuals who have experience of working with marginalised groups. The HDA (2000) review noted that the most successful arts-based interventions were often based on the intuition of an individual who acted as an impetus for the project's conception, development and deployment. This dependence on a limited number of key players has implications when considering the sustainability of such work..

Further barriers identified by PAT 10 included: projects being tailored to programme/policy criteria rather than community needs, short-term perspectives and poor links between arts/sports bodies and major players such as schools.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This review has illustrated the complexity of the concept 'social exclusion' and difficulties in defining and measuring it; it is then not surprising that the meaning of social exclusion has been the source of some confusion in the arts sector. Many artists have worked with disenfranchised groups for some time without reference to government agendas, but there is an increased interest in their work because of shifting political and policy priorities.

PAT 10 claimed the arts can contribute to neighbourhood renewal and make a real difference to health, crime, employment and education in deprived communities. A number of more specific claims have also been made about the personal, social, educational and environmental impacts of the arts. However, commentators have maintained that there is an absence of rigorous analysis and long-term evaluation and this paper has touched on some of the reasons why this has been the case.

The literature concerned with the impacts of the arts falls into three main categories: literature reviews, studies concerned with the impact of the arts in specific settings (such as education for example) and more generalist arts impact studies. The focus of much of

this research has not been the arts and social exclusion but nevertheless the methodologies implemented and impacts identified are of relevance to the Arts Council research.

Much of the available research can be criticised in some way; small sample surveys, reliance on self-report measures, presentation of case-studies in a generalist way, lack of analysis relating to processes and so on. Often the conclusions drawn from such studies require qualification, and as has been noted earlier, there are many challenges inherent in measuring the social impacts of the arts. However, the themes emerging from existing research have been consistent<sup>23</sup> and are supported by a large body of more anecdotal evidence which should not be dismissed.<sup>24</sup> In some areas, such as the arts in health and arts in education, the evidence-base is not only growing in size but also in strength.

This review deals with a body of research that has only emerged relatively recently and there are still many areas that require further exploration including: the relationship between the concept of social exclusion and arts impacts; the transfer of effects into other situations; development of more rigorous methods for assessing the acquisition of skills, self confidence, self esteem and other impacts and distance travelled toward hard social inclusion outcomes; the long term effects of arts participation; the factors that can help influence the effectiveness of such activity.

Currently the focus of policy and research interest is on the value of the arts in reaching non-arts social inclusion goals such as health but perhaps there is an argument for saying that arts inclusion should be considered one of the dimensions of social inclusion itself.

The research the Arts Council has commissioned, of which this literature review is part, cannot hope to answer all the questions that this paper has raised and that is not its aim. However, it is hoped that it will enable a comparative analysis of different types of arts practice, test ways of measuring the impact of the arts, and make a contribution towards building a robust and credible evidence-base.

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<sup>23</sup> Which might suggest there is evidence from different sources that corroborates the conclusions or alternatively that researchers and arts practitioners have been too eager to draw the same conclusions.

<sup>24</sup> For example, there is a huge body of unpublished reports which, although unpublished and of variable standards in terms of quality of research, nevertheless are 'evidence'.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Impact measurement – indicators and other tools of measurement

#### 1. Williams' (1997) outcome areas and indicators

Outcome areas	Indicators
Developing human capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improved communication skills</li> <li>increased ability to plan and organise</li> <li>increased problem-solving abilities</li> <li>improved ability to collect, organise and analyse information</li> <li>developed creative ability</li> </ul>
Increasing social capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improved levels of communication in community</li> <li>improved levels of community planning and organisation</li> <li>greater tolerance of different cultures or lifestyles</li> <li>improved consultation between government and community</li> <li>increased appreciation of community culture</li> </ul>
Building and developing communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stronger sense of community identity</li> <li>a decrease in people experiencing social isolation</li> <li>improved recreational options for community</li> <li>development of local or community enterprises</li> <li>improvements to, and increased uses of, public facilities</li> </ul>
Activating social change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increased community awareness of an issue</li> <li>community action to resolve a social issue</li> <li>greater tolerance of different cultures or lifestyles</li> <li>increase in local or community employment options</li> <li>increased levels of public safety</li> </ul>
Improving economic performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cost savings in public services or programmes</li> <li>increase in local or community employment options</li> <li>improved standards of consultation between government and community</li> <li>development of local or community enterprises</li> <li>increased business investment in community cultural development</li> <li>increased resources attracted into community and spent locally</li> </ul>

## 2. Health Development Agency (HDA) (2000)

The HDA review involved surveying arts projects about the impact of their work.

The question was asked '*What role has the project played in enhancing community development? Please give examples where possible (or you may wish to choose from the categories below).*' The table below lists the response categories provided.

Health and well being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support to vulnerable individuals/groups</li> <li>health education</li> <li>pleasure – quality of life</li> </ul>
Social cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>promotion of neighbourhood security</li> <li>rehabilitation of offenders</li> <li>intergenerational contact</li> <li>increased friendship</li> <li>increased contact with other cultures</li> </ul>
Community empowerment/self-determination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>building organisational skills/capacity</li> <li>transferable organisational skills</li> <li>control over lives</li> <li>regeneration: partnership between residents/public agencies</li> <li>local democracy</li> <li>increased sense of individuals' rights</li> <li>individuals with keen involvement in the future</li> </ul>
Local image/identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development of local identity/sense of belonging</li> <li>affirmed pride/image of marginalised groups</li> <li>involved community in environmental improvements</li> <li>changed perception of public agencies/local authorities</li> <li>people feeling more positive about where they live</li> <li>people keen to help on local projects</li> </ul>
Changed perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>participants felt more creative and confident</li> <li>participants/professionals tried new things/changed their ideas</li> <li>art impacted on professional work practice</li> <li>professionals became more responsive to community's views/interests</li> <li>professionals became more prepared for risk-taking</li> </ul>

The HDA survey also asked '*We don't expect formal evaluation methods, but in your opinion, do results suggest any of the following?*'. A list of response categories was provided under headings which included making life better, local involvement, personal development and creation of public art. Categories are reproduced below.

Making life better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increased take-up of health/social services</li> <li>reduced take-up of health/social services elsewhere</li> <li>reduction of visits to GP</li> <li>improved dialogue with healthcare practitioners</li> <li>reduced waiting lists</li> <li>reduction in prescriptions</li> <li>reduced area transfers/relocation</li> <li>reduced expenditure on vandalism</li> <li>pain reduction</li> <li>increased individual happiness (friendships, etc.)</li> <li>lifestyle change (smoking, diet, etc.)</li> <li>stress reduction</li> <li>increased employment</li> <li>increased literacy</li> <li>increased assertiveness</li> <li>improved environments</li> </ul>
Local involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>numbers involved in planning</li> <li>involvement of all sections of community</li> <li>people making new friends</li> <li>use of play areas/new public space</li> <li>reduced crime or fear of crime</li> </ul>
Personal development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increased confidence</li> <li>involvement with other community activities</li> <li>sought new skills</li> <li>sought personal development via training</li> <li>developed language/creative/social skills</li> <li>employment</li> </ul>
Creation of public art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increased number of art objects in area</li> <li>positive peer assessment response – or just any response</li> <li>reduced vandalism to artwork</li> <li>increased number of temporary arts activities/workshops</li> <li>involvement of participants beyond local area</li> </ul>

### 3. Matarasso (1997)

A participant's questionnaire used in Comedia's social impact of the arts programme of research and was completed by 513 participants. The questions are reproduced below.

Yes	No	Don't know
-----	----	------------

Have you been involved in arts activity before?

Did you help to plan what happened?

Since being involved I have...

...made new friends.

... become more interested in something new

... learnt about other people's cultures

... been to new places

... tried things I haven't done before

... become more confident about what I can do

...decided to do some training or course

... felt better or healthier

... become keen to help in local projects

... been happier

Has taking part had any bad effects for you?

Has taking part encouraged you to try anything else?

Has it made you feel differently about your rights?

Have you learnt any skills by being involved?

Do you feel differently about the place where you live?

Would you like to be involved in more work like this?

If yes, would like to help organise it?

Could you do it better than could have before?

Has the project changed your ideas about anything?

Was being able to express your ideas important to you?

Was doing something creative important to you?

*Use or Ornament?* (Matarasso, 1997) contains a list of 50 social impacts that give a sense of the range of social outcomes identified through the Comedia research.

1. increase people's confidence and sense of self-worth
2. extend involvement in social activity
3. give people influence over how they are seen by others
4. stimulate interest and confidence in the arts
5. provide a forum to explore personal rights and responsibilities
6. contribute to the educational development of children
7. encourage adults to take up education and training opportunities
8. help build new skills and work experience
9. contribute to people's employability
10. help people take up or develop careers in the arts
11. reduce isolation by helping people to make friends

12. develop community networks and sociability
13. promote tolerance and contribute to conflict resolution
14. provide a forum for intercultural understanding and friendship
15. help validate the contribution of a whole community
16. promote intercultural contact and co-operation
17. develop contact between the generations
18. help offenders and victims address issues of crime
19. provide a route to rehabilitation and integration for offenders
20. build community organisational capacity
21. encourage local self-reliance and project management
22. help people extend control over their lives
23. be a means of gaining insight into political and social ideas
24. facilitate effective public consultation and participation
25. help involve local people in the regeneration process
26. facilitate the development of partnership
27. build support for community projects
28. strengthen community co-operation and networking
29. develop pride in local traditions and cultures
30. help people feel a sense of belonging and involvement
31. create community traditions in new towns or neighbourhoods
32. involve residents in environmental improvements
33. provide reasons for people to develop community activities
34. improve perceptions of marginalised groups
35. help transform the image of public bodies
36. make people feel better about where they live
37. help people develop their creativity
38. erode the distinction between consumer and creator
39. allow people to explore their values, meanings and dreams
40. enrich the practice of professionals in the public and voluntary sectors
41. transform the responsiveness of public service organisations
42. encourage people to accept risk positively
43. help community groups raise their vision beyond the immediate
44. challenge conventional service delivery
45. raise expectations about what is possible and desirable
46. have a positive impact on how people feel
47. be an effective means of health education
48. contribute to a more relaxed atmosphere in health centres
49. help improve the quality of life of people with poor health
50. provide a unique and deep source of enjoyment

#### 4. Harland et al (2001)

The National Foundation for Educational Research developed a survey which included the question below.

11. What have you got out of studying these subjects during your time at secondary school (Years 7-11)? *Please circle as many as apply for each subject.*

<i>I think that taking this subject at school</i>	Art	Dance	Drama	Music	Literature novels and poetry
teaches particular skills	1	2	3	4	5
gives you self-confidence socially/helps you to get on with people	1	2	3	4	5
helps you to feel good about yourself	1	2	3	4	5
helps you to learn in other subjects	1	2	3	4	5
helps you to think and clarifies your thinking	1	2	3	4	5
helps you to understand people's feelings and emotions	1	2	3	4	5
helps with a future job or career	1	2	3	4	5
gives you knowledge of the art form and appreciation of people's work in it	1	2	3	4	5
helps to express yourself better	1	2	3	4	5
gives you a sense of pleasure/ enjoyment/ satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5
helps you learn more about social issues and problems	1	2	3	4	5
helps you to be more creative/ imaginative	1	2	3	4	5

## APPENDIX 2

### Three analytical frameworks

#### 1. Health Development Agency, 2000

A literature review and expert advice from an advisory panel of experienced practitioners enabled the Health Development Agency to identify the following criteria:

- congenial atmosphere: demonstrating comfort, congeniality, improved conversation etc
- organic connection with participants
- cross-sectoral working
- improved physical/social environment
- ‘valued’, rather than ‘value for money’ projects
- high profile and impact artwork
- health economic infrastructure
- sustainability beyond ‘catalytic individuals’ or ‘individual champions’
- clear mission statement/vision/agenda
- improved education
- reflective practice
- ongoing aims/aspirations
- distinctive contribution

#### 2. Matarasso, 1997

A list of key questions was drawn up to form a common framework of inquiry in each case study in Matarasso’s work.

1. What social impacts are the programme intending to achieve, and how have these been identified in relation to local needs?
2. By what process has the arts initiative been designed to achieve them?
3. Are project participants aware of the social impacts which have been identified?
4. Are they able to participate in this process, from setting objectives and indicators to evaluating and explaining results?
5. What indicators and standards of performance are to be used and why?
6. What systems and processes will be used to evaluate the programme’s impact?
7. How does it integrate and compare with other social programmes (whether arts-based or not) being sponsored by the same agency?
8. How does the return on investment compare with that delivered by other social programmes?

#### 3. Carpenter, 1991

Carpenter conducted an evaluation of six projects involving the arts and socially excluded communities using four criteria which enabled her to analyse the ways the audience participated and judge the quality of the participative process:

- Equal value: whether artists and audiences had equal value
- Control of agenda: extent to which audience determined the concept, design and implementation of the artwork
- Ways of participating: whether there was a variety of means by which audiences could make their views known and influence the direction of artistic activity
- New understandings and skills: opportunities for the audience to deepen understanding of the arts and develop or enhance artistic skills.

Her criteria were drawn from a democratic process set out by Dahl in *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy* (1982) and quoted in Held's *Models of Democracy* (1996). Carpenter noted these criteria were normative as well as descriptive and explanatory ie. they prescribe a standard and express a value, as well as describe and explain.