

# QUICKGUIDE TO USING THE EVALUATION TOOLKIT FOR THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ARTS

## ***Introduction***

This evaluation toolkit was written in 2004 to help voluntary and community arts organisations in Northern Ireland to evaluate their work, especially their social impact on participants. Arts organisations in Northern Ireland are subject to strong pressures to measure their achievements and some already have excellent evaluation systems. This toolkit aims to increase the consistency of evaluation work so that individual arts organisations can better understand and explain their effects, but also so that the entire sector can make a stronger case to the Government.

## ***Benefits of using the Toolkit***

The benefits from the toolkit reported by the pilot group were:

- "We have never asked participants about disability or employment status before. It is useful to know."
- "It is very beneficial. The standard enrolment form helps us keep track of what we are doing."
- "The questionnaires make the artists feel that they are part of the organisation."
- "There is a collective agreement that the forms are good. No staff have queried the point."
- "It is good to have one set of forms across the organisation. We used to have so many questionnaires. The toolkit has brought coherence across the organisation."
- "It is easier to collect data as we go along. Also, this means that the tasks can be delegated to project staff rather than falling to me (organisation director)."

## ***The content of the Toolkit***

The toolkit contains:

- A set of principles to frame evaluation in a way that is beneficial to arts organisations (Introduction).
- An explanation of the purpose and benefits of evaluation (Background).
- A set of thought and actions for each stage of a project or programme (main text).
- Guidance on when to use external evaluators (Appendix One).
- Guidance on the strengths and weaknesses of different evaluation methods (Appendix One).

- Guidance on how to write questionnaires (Appendix One).
- Guidance on how to draw a sample (Appendix One).
- Guidance on how to analyse data (Appendix One).
- Guidance on how to write an evaluation report (Appendix One).
- Guidance on how to disseminate an evaluation report (Appendix One).
- Guidance on what constitutes a good evaluation (Appendix One).
- Obligatory questionnaires (Appendix Two).
- Optional questionnaires (Appendix Three).

### ***The purpose of the Quickguide***

The Toolkit is designed for different users and levels of interest:

- If you are the main person responsible for evaluation in your organisation then you will probably want to read the Evaluation Toolkit through from the beginning.
- If you are responsible for collecting data then you might want to go straight to the questionnaires. The Quickguide has been designed for you.
- If you have questions about evaluation then you can refer to the Appendices.

### ***The questionnaires***

There are nine questionnaires that must be completed (where relevant) by all organisations receiving core funding (RFOs) or project funding over £5,000:

#### **Organisational Form**

This gives background information and is relevant to all organisations. Only one form needs to be submitted and thereafter updated annually.

#### **Support Services Form**

This is relevant if your organisation provides any support services to artists or arts organisations.

#### **Financial Form**

This is relevant to all organisations.

#### **Attendance Sheet for Individuals**

This is relevant for all projects where 90% of the group are aged 17 or over.

#### **Activity Form for Participation**

This form will be relevant to most voluntary and community arts organisations. It gives information on any educational workshops, classes, or other participative projects carried out. One form is filled in per project.

### **Activity Form for Productions/Concerts**

This short questionnaire gives information on productions, so that this does not need to be repeated for each performance listing.

### **Activity Form for Performances/Concerts**

This will cover most of the work of performing arts organisations as well as the larger live performances, live shows and concerts produced by the voluntary and community arts.

### **Activity form for Exhibitions**

This covers the work of galleries as well as larger exhibitions from voluntary and community arts organisations.

### **Activity Form for Publications**

This refers to any catalogues, newsletters, books or periodicals for the arts sector last year. Do not include marketing brochures or publicity leaflets.

The Activity Form for Participation includes a section on exhibitions and concerts that are an inherent part of the participative process. Use your judgement to decide whether performances or exhibitions are of sufficient scale to warrant separate listing in the Activity Form for Performances/Concerts or the Activity Form for Exhibitions.

Copies of all obligatory questionnaires are given in Appendix Two of the Evaluation Toolkit. There is a simple spreadsheet for recording answers, to be analysed by ACNI.

There are eight optional questionnaires that you could use in your organisation:

#### **Enrolment Form**

This records basic information about clients on participative projects. Information is collected at the first or second contact.

#### **Attendance Sheet for Groups**

This records attendance for each session of a participative project.

#### **Quality Form and Observation Form**

These are optional forms that you can use to help to record internal reflections on your work.

#### **Outcomes Questionnaire**

This measures the short term impact of your project on the participants.

#### **Outcomes Questionnaire for Young People**

This has been designed for use by people aged 11-16.

### **Artist's Evaluation Form, Teacher's/Youth Leader's Evaluation Form and Organisational Head's Evaluation Form**

These are optional forms for youth arts projects. They can be completed by a sample or all people involved in the project, in writing or over the telephone.

In addition, ACNI will be carrying out a survey using the **Follow up Questionnaire**. This provides more detailed information on long term the impact of your project on participants.

Drafts for all the optional questionnaires are given in Appendix Three.

### ***Any queries?***

If you have queries about the Toolkit, please contact Graeme Stevenson, [g.stevenson@artscouncil-ni.org](mailto:g.stevenson@artscouncil-ni.org), who will collate questions and forward them to Annabel Jackson.