

## **2012 Cultural Leadership Summit**

Co-presented by the Hong Kong Arts Administrators Association and West Kowloon Cultural District Authority

### **Breakout session 1) On the current practice and trends in the use of key performance indicators in the arts**

Date: 31 May 2012

Time: 1400-1530

Venue: Eric Ho Tung Studio, Hong Kong Arts Centre

#### **Notes prepared by Mr Graham Devlin**

### **1 Objectives**

The following points summarise possible objectives of a monitoring / evaluation process

- Understanding how (and how well) the project's meets its specific objectives and delivers against the organisation's strategic objectives
- An articulation of that understanding
- An analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and risks of the project
- Satisfaction as to the effective financial controls of the project
- Identification of the potential for enhancing quality.
- Identification of the potential for skills development.
- Ways of embedding learning and reflective practice in the organisation.
- Helping build evaluative capacity within the project team.
- Creating a persuasive story to enable external communication
- Informing decisions about future projects

### **2 Key areas of focus for evaluation**

Monitoring and Evaluation might cover the following areas:

- Quality
- Value and Cost issues
- Partners: including fit with objectives, engagement, perception of success, outcomes (attendances, new demographics and ongoing and new partnerships)
- Artists' involvement
- Finance and Resources: including funding, budgeting, resource allocation and controls
- Leadership and Management: including of staff, volunteers; participants and stakeholders

### **3 The Points of the Exercise**

Monitoring and evaluation should be purposeful, comprehensive, focused and useful.

#### **3.1 Purposeful**

- The purpose of monitoring and evaluation (and the practical implications) should be clearly explained to enable all involved to see the process as beneficial and constructive
- Performance Indicators should be significant and strategic (not just easy to capture)
- They should also be unambiguous and sensitive with defined margins of error.
- Qualitative information should be used to help define monitoring indicators that are meaningful - and to enrich their interpretation.
- Findings should be set in context

#### **3.2 Comprehensive.**

- Questions and sample groups should be designed to achieve completeness, consistency, accuracy and ensure the analysis is representative of the totality of the project.
- A range of qualitative and quantitative data gathering methods should be used to achieve as close to a 360 degree over-view as possible.
- Data should be compiled throughout the programme to ensure a clear picture of progress and demonstrate the development of the programme
- Different aspects of a programme are likely to deliver on different timescales; this should be taken into account
- The process should relate individual pieces of evaluation data to one another to provide a coherent overall body of knowledge

#### **3.3 Focused**

- The evaluation should be focussed on key issues that are meaningful and important to the success of the project – both to ensure a high standard of analysis and to avoid demand overload
- The data required should be identified from the early stages of a programme rather than retrospectively
- Where possible, data should be related to appropriate benchmarks and historic baselines
- Where possible, intermediate indicators should be identified which can suggest likely future performance

#### **3.4 Useful**

- The monitoring and evaluation process should be integrated into the day to day operations of the programme – and linked to management information systems.
- Data collection and analysis should not be duplicated but developed in the context of existing (and previous) processes.
- Any interim reports should be timed to optimise their contribution to the process
- Summary findings should be available to contributors
- Internal capacity should be built
- The evaluation should seek to identify possible learning and improvements

#### 4 Methodology

The successful implementation of a monitoring and evaluation processes depends on all involved parties having a clear set of agreed objectives and priorities for the programme.

The process might cover the following elements

**Events and Activities**, including qualitative indicators such as the perceived success of the artistic practice and audience response, volunteering and plans for legacy as well as quantitative such as participant and audience numbers,

**Partners**: including fit with objectives, engagement, perception of success, outcomes (attendances, new demographics and ongoing and new partnerships)

**Artists**: including involvement, outcomes (e.g. artistic practice, profile, work opportunities), perception of success

**Finance and Resources**: including funding, budgeting, resource allocation and controls

**Leadership and Management**: including of staff, volunteers; participants and stakeholders.

The core mechanism in this process should be rigorous self-evaluation, against an agreed set of criteria derived from the objectives. This is likely to involve:

- Agreement of the objectives of the programme (as a whole, for its constituent parts and for the purposes of all relevant partners)
- Translating those objectives into measures of success and establishing a small number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and/or Impact Measures around each of the objectives
- Testing the assumptions underlying the programme and its anticipated impacts
- Creating a base-line where appropriate (e.g. activity levels, current/target audiences, partnerships, financial parameters, educational attainments, satisfaction surveys) for the KPIs;
- Setting up light-touch tracking mechanisms for the programme (e.g. user surveys)
- Ensuring that all projects are adequately documented through a range of media
- Engaging an external evaluator to engage with the programme from the outset stakeholders

This will be complemented and tested through external assessment, adopting all or some of the following methodology:

- Activity mapping
- review of relevant documentation (grant applications, minutes of decision making meetings, appropriate correspondence, budgets - and associated management accounts - publicity materials etc.)
- meetings with the appropriate staff from the organisation itself, key personnel from funders, partner organisations and, where appropriate, representatives of participating communities - both during and after the project
- attending relevant workshops, residencies, training days, rehearsals and performances;
- audience and participant surveys and *Vox Pop* interviews as appropriate
- questionnaires where appropriate, designed for ready collation into meaningful data (both quantitative and qualitative)
- undertaking post-event de-briefs as appropriate