

Arts Council England

# Developing participatory metrics

## Foreword

I welcome the publication of this report that for the first time brings together the exciting work being carried out through the 'quality metrics' and 'children and young people quality principles' projects.

Quality metrics is a metrics framework that uses self, peer and public assessment to capture the quality of arts and cultural work. Children and young people quality principles is a set of common principles for achieving quality in work by, with and for children and young people.

Although the two projects have developed separately as sector-led initiatives, it has been clear for a while that there is significant potential for collaboration between the two. The Arts Council therefore facilitated a meeting between members of the Manchester consortium leading the quality metrics pilot and the Children and Young People External Reference Group to explore the potential for aligning the two pieces of work.

This resulted in Re:Bourne Ltd being commissioned by the Arts Council to work with John Knell and a group of individuals who have been actively involved in the development of the children and young people quality principles to undertake development work on a set of metrics suitable for participatory work by, with and for children and young people. My thanks go to all the organisations and individuals who took part in this project.

This report sets out the results of that work. We believe that it has provided valuable insight into what a set of participatory metrics might look like and how they could align with the children and young people quality principles. The next step will be to refine and test the metrics developed through this project across a wider range of organisations and artforms. To that end, I am pleased to say that 10 organisations will now be invited to further develop and test these metrics over the next six months as part of the next phase of quality metrics work. Our hope is that we will be able to develop a robust and easy to use set of quality metrics to sit alongside the children and young people quality principles, providing the sector with strong foundations on which to build the delivery of the Cultural Education Challenge.

We look forward to sharing the results of the next stage of the work with you.

Simon Mellor

Executive Director, Arts and Culture

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## Introduction: Developing participatory metrics

This project, supported by Arts Council England, was designed as a directly complementary piece of work to two other initiatives:

- the ongoing quality metrics work currently being supported by an Arts Council England, Arts and Humanities Research Council, and NESTA Digital R&D grant award
- the children and young people quality principles that have been developed by the sector and Arts Council England

The aim of the project has been to work with the participating cultural organisations and experts to coproduce a new set of standardised metrics to measure the quality of participatory work across the arts and cultural sector.

To meet those aims this pilot project contained the following elements and activities:

- to work with the group to determine what key outcomes best capture the quality of participatory work across the cultural sector
- to develop a clear 'outcome' set for the key dimensions of quality of participatory work, and then to begin to develop metric statements that captured the essence of these outcomes
- to carry out some preliminary testing of the new metrics within the Arts Council/ Arts and Humanities Research Council/NESTA supported quality metrics project
- to report on these activities and begin to share the findings and insights with the wider arts and cultural sector

Appendix 1 details the cultural organisations and experts involved in the metric formation workshops. The key desired outcome of the project was the creation of a new set of participatory metrics that could be used both by:

- adult amateur participants in cultural activities
- children and young people participating in cultural activities

Throughout the metric creation process a number of key principles guided our activities:

- to model the metric statements with real cultural events in mind. So for example, all of the cultural organisations involved shared their experience of real events at the metric formation meetings so that we could model the types of experiences and outcomes that are produced by excellent cultural participation activities
- to cross reference the emerging key desired outcomes and metrics for participatory experiences against Art Council England's children and young people quality principles to ensure that there was alignment and connection between the new metrics set and the quality principles.
- to try and complete the work reasonably quickly in order to allow the new participatory metrics to be tested at appropriate events taking place within the

NESTA/Arts Council/ Arts and Humanities Research Council Digital R&D fund supported quality metrics project.

This report aims to summarise the work that has been undertaken by the participatory metrics group. The report has been drafted to:

1. Describe the overall approach and working processes undertaken by the group developing the participatory metrics.
2. Provide a more detailed account of the metric formation process, teasing out some of the key challenges and issues around the ongoing development and deployment of the participatory metrics. Of particular interest here are the challenges around developing a core set of participatory metrics that can work effectively for all cultural and heritage organisations.
3. Draw some conclusions about the opportunities and challenges of continuing to develop and deploy these metrics across the arts and cultural sector.

## **Chapter 1: Developing the metrics – overall approach**

## ***Introduction***

John Knell and Catherine Bunting, the facilitators of the metric formation process, and the group participating set themselves the challenge of:

- (a) Producing a set of metrics for assessing the quality of a participatory process.
- (b) Working out how the existing self, peer and public assessment processes used in the quality metrics pilot<sup>1</sup> might need to be adapted for participatory work.
- (c) Sense-checking the resulting participation module to make sure it's appropriate for work *by, with* and *for* young people aged 11 to 18.
- (d) Sense-check the quality metrics (capturing the quality of cultural experiences) that had previously been developed in the quality metrics pilot to assess how appropriate they are in their current form for work *for* young people aged 11 to 18.<sup>2</sup>
- (e) Make recommendations about next steps and further development.

### **1.1. Working process**

The metric formation process took the form of whole group meetings of the participatory metrics consortium members (there were five substantive sessions; four to co-produce the metrics and one to review the test results piloting the metrics and the forward implications).

For the inception meeting, John Knell produced an introductory presentation – outlining the aims of the project, and agreeing the ground rules for how the group was going to work together. The key content elements of that presentation were to firmly establish the following:

- that the group would use the children and young people quality principles as a sense check to test the scope and breadth of the outcome areas and metric statements we developed to capture the quality of participatory experiences
- that we would develop the metrics with real participatory processes in mind, focusing in on past or current participatory processes being run by the cultural organisations in the group, the aim being to explore the participatory dynamics of those pieces of work as a route into reflecting on the desired participatory experiences being sought

From this starting point the group spent their time together brainstorming, agreeing and refining the key outcome areas and where relevant the indicative metric statements.

### **1.2. Note taking and workshop progress**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/research-and-data/quality-work/quality-metrics/>

<sup>2</sup> This activity has been subsumed within the ongoing testing activity as part of the Arts Council England/Arts and Humanities Research Council/NESTA Digital R&D grant award.

As the sessions developed key questions and issues were raised about the outcome set and the group's approach to developing the metrics, both in terms of their applicability across different participatory settings and processes, and the design principles underpinning their formation. Those deliberations are extremely valuable in understanding the character of the final outcome and metric set (see Chapter 2). Appendix 2 includes some summary notes from the key metrics sessions, which the group used to reflect on and refine the metrics.

After each meeting, John Knell and Catherine Bunting produced a powerpoint presentation of the emerging outcome set and metrics – effectively a 'live working' draft of the group's metric formation work. The presentation would then form the starting point for discussions at the next meeting. The key meetings took place every two weeks, which allowed ample time for reflection between meetings, and for John Knell and Catherine Bunting to respond to requests for changes and modifications.

The core elements of the outcome set were in place after the first two meetings, with the next two meetings concerned with developing the metric statements capturing the core essence of the outcomes.

## **Chapter 2: Core outcomes and metrics set**

As a result of the co-production sessions the group settled on a list of outcomes/standardised metric statements to capture the quality of participatory work in the arts and cultural sector.

Appendix 3 contains a summary of the development of these outcomes and metric statements in the co-production sessions.

The list of outcomes and metrics approved by the group for piloting is as follows:

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

### *OPEN TEXT questions*

What three words best describe how you felt about it?

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

A sample of these metrics was then piloted at two events using the Culture Counts platform to gather the data. The events chosen were:

- *Wonderstruck* in Manchester (produced and presented by People United and Manchester Museum)
- *Lord of the Flies* in Bradford (produced and presented by Matthew Bourne/New Adventures)

Appendix 4 presents a summary of the results for these two test events. The experience of using the metrics, and these headline findings from the two test events, fed into the final group session at which we reviewed which metrics were working well, and discussed how best to continue to develop and refine the metrics.

Whilst the participatory metrics do not test perceptions about the quality of participatory work, they can be combined with the quality of cultural experience metrics to measure both the quality of the participatory process and any resulting performance, exhibition or show. This is precisely the case in the *Lord of the Flies* example in Appendix 4.

### **2.1. Alignment and fit with the children and young people quality principles**

At all points in the process the working group kept sense checking the emerging metric set against the children and young people quality principles, with the aim of ensuring that all of the key categories in the quality principles were reflected in the outcome ranges in the participatory metrics.

Figure 1 below shows the strong degree of alignment between the participatory metrics and the children and young people quality principles.

The mapping analysis also highlights a similar insight to the one produced by the quality of cultural experience metrics process – namely that ‘excellence’ is an amalgam of more than more metric. The excellence outcome when applied to participatory work across the arts and cultural sector, or as the quality principles describe it, ‘striving for excellence and innovation’, is an amalgam of all of the other key outcomes/participatory metrics developed by the working group. Or if you prefer, excellence is the product of successfully meeting all of the other six children and young people quality principles (with the metrics allowing organisations to evaluate their performance against the principles).

The Manchester metrics group came to a similar conclusion after the generation of the quality of cultural experience metrics, namely that when considering the ‘excellence’ of cultural experiences you need a ‘dashboard’ of measures which together create the current core metric set for quality of cultural experience. For the Manchester metrics group:

‘Excellent work would be defined by the performance of a particular performance or programme of work across our suggested dashboard of outcome measures.’

### **Figure 1: Participatory metrics mapped against the children and young people quality principles**

| Children and young people quality principles   | Participatory metrics   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1. Striving for excellence and innovation</b><br/>‘Is there a real commitment to achieving excellence by, with and for children and young people?’</p> | <p><i>Organisation:</i> The project was well organised</p>  |
| <p><b>2. Being authentic</b><br/>‘Is it authentic; is it the real thing?’</p>  | <p><i>Respect:</i> I was treated as an equal<br/> <i>Voice:</i> My ideas were taken seriously<br/> <i>Contribution:</i> I felt like my contribution mattered<br/> <i>Authenticity:</i> It felt like a real artistic experience<br/> <i>Feedback:</i> I got helpful feedback</p>   |
| <p><b>3. Being exciting, inspiring and engaging</b><br/>‘Are children and young people excited, engaged and inspired?’</p>                                   | <p><i>Worldview:</i> It helped me understand something new about the world<br/> <i>Motivation:</i> I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future<br/> <i>Enjoyment:</i> I had a good time</p> <p><i>Open text (experience)</i> What three words best describe how you felt about it?</p>  |
| <p><b>4. Ensuring a positive and inclusive experience</b><br/>‘Do children and young people have a positive and inclusive experience?’</p>                   | <p><i>Responsiveness:</i> The organisers responded well to the needs of the group<br/> <i>Support:</i> People in the group supported each other<br/> <i>Acceptance:</i> I felt like I could be myself<br/> <i>Empathy:</i> It helped me understand other people’s points of view<br/> <i>New people:</i> I got to know people who are different to me</p> |
| <p><b>5. Actively involving children and young people</b><br/>‘Are children and young people actively involved?’</p>   | <p><i>Intensity:</i> I felt deeply involved in the process<br/> <i>Clarity:</i> I was clear about what we were all here to do</p>   |
| Children and young people quality principles   | Participatory metrics   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>6. Enabling personal progression</b><br/> 'Do children and young people progress and know where to go next?'</p>                | <p><i>Experimenting:</i> I felt comfortable trying new things</p> <p><i>Creativity:</i> I feel more able to express myself creatively</p> <p><i>Achievement:</i> I was amazed by what we achieved</p> <p><i>Stretch:</i> I did something I didn't know I was capable of</p> <p><i>Confidence:</i> I feel more confident about doing new things</p> <p><i>Opportunity:</i> The project opened up new opportunities for me</p> <p><i>Skills:</i> I gained new skills</p> <p><i>(or an alternative question on artistic skills)</i></p> <p><i>Artistic skills:</i> I improved my artistic skills</p> <p>Open text (legacy) Will you do anything different as a result of this experience?</p> |
| <p><b>7. Developing belonging and ownership</b><br/> 'Do children and young people feel they belong and that it belongs to them?'</p> | <p><i>Belonging:</i> They made me feel part of the team</p> <p><i>Friendship:</i> I felt close to other people involved in the project</p> <p><i>Welcome:</i> They helped me to feel part of XXXXX (company/project/community group name) [<i>optional context-specific question</i>]</p>  |

The participatory metrics group effectively came to the same conclusion with regard to the participatory metrics and the issue of measuring the excellence of participatory work across the arts and cultural sector. The measures for participatory work that have been generated need to be tested across a wide range of participatory work in order to evaluate and assess whether they are providing an insightful and comprehensive account of the quality of participatory work. One exciting element of the project is that

we can be certain that the outcome range in the ‘dashboard’ of participatory metrics will provide powerful insights on the extent to which any participatory process is performing effectively against the children and young people quality principles.

## ***2.2. Comparison of the participatory metrics with the quality of cultural experience metrics***

A number of things stand out about the participatory metrics set as compared to the current list of quality of cultural experience metrics (see Figure 2 below for a list of the current quality of cultural experience metrics).

The first is that the diversity of participatory process and outcomes (eg short or long, event or no event, co-produced content with the amateur participants versus a performance only element from the amateur participants), modeled by the group in the metric formation sessions, has produced a longer list of important potential participatory outcomes and corresponding metric statements. This suggests a number of obvious implications as we look ahead to the ongoing development, use and refinements of the participatory metrics.

The ‘core set’ for evaluating participatory processes across the arts and cultural sectors is going to have more dimensions than the emerging ‘core set’ for evaluating the quality of cultural experiences.

Looking ahead, the Culture Counts team, responding to user feedback (and the frequency with which particular metrics are chosen by the user community), will be able to refine and detail a suggested core set, alongside recommended additional options. But in practice, which of these metrics are used to evaluate a particular participatory process will be shaped by the character and complexity of the participatory process, and the preferences of the user. For our work as a group on this project we produced a suggested rationalisation of the longer list detailed above (see Figure 3 below).

The current suggested participatory metrics set needs to be widely tested and subjected to peer review and comment. In comparison to the amount of peer review and testing that the quality of cultural experience metrics have had thus far, the participatory metrics presented here obviously represent a fledgling first take on an appropriate metric set, although we are confident that the outcome ranges are likely to be widely supported and endorsed given their close alignment with practitioner practice and the children and young people quality principles which have been the subject of extensive development and consultation.

The Culture Counts team are also clear from our experience in developing the quality of cultural experience metrics that the best way of developing them further is through their use in evaluating real participatory processes, rather than further prolonged co-production activity in a workshop environment. This was also the settled view of the work group that produced the participatory metrics.

**Figure 2: Current quality of cultural experience metrics**

**Self, peer and public assessment:**

**Concept:** it was an interesting idea/programme

**Presentation:** it was well produced and presented

**Distinctiveness:** it was different from things I've experienced before

**Rigour:** it was well thought through and put together

**Relevance:** it had something to say about the world in which we live

**Challenge:** it was thought-provoking

**Captivation:** it was absorbing and held my attention

**Meaning:** it meant something to me personally

**Enthusiasm:** I would come to something like this again

**Local impact:** it is important that it's happening here

**Self and peer only:**

**Risk:** the artists/curators really challenged themselves with this work

**Originality:** it was ground-breaking

**Excellence (national):** it is amongst the best of its type in the UK

**Excellence (global):** it is amongst the best of its type in the world

**Figure 3: Short-list of the participatory metrics**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <i>Enjoyment:</i>     | I had a good time   |
| <i>Organisation:</i>  | The project was well organised                            |
| <i>Authenticity:</i>  | It felt like a real artistic experience                   |
| <i>Respect:</i>       | I was treated as an equal                                 |
| <i>Contribution:</i>  | I felt like my contribution was valued                    |
| <i>Acceptance:</i>    | I felt like I could be myself                             |
| <i>Experimenting:</i> | I felt encouraged to try new things                       |
| <i>Feedback:</i>      | I got helpful feedback                                    |
| <i>Belonging:</i>     | I felt part of the team                                   |
| <i>New people:</i>    | I got to know people who are different to me              |
| <i>Achievement:</i>   | I was proud of what we achieved                           |
| <i>Stretch:</i>       | I did something I didn't know I was capable of            |
| <i>Skills:</i>        | I developed my skills                                     |
| <i>Opportunity:</i>   | The project has opened up new opportunities for me        |
| <i>Progression:</i>   | I know what to do next to develop my interest in the arts |

*OPEN TEXT questions*

What three words best describe how you felt about it?

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

Culture Counts has received user feedback indicating that cultural organisations will be keen to develop their own bespoke metrics alongside suggested core metrics, and benchmark against similar cultural organisations engaged in similar types of work. We

will be providing a range of functionality in the Culture Counts platform that makes this process straightforward and insightful for users. As with the quality of cultural experience metrics, what is exciting about having developed the participatory metrics is that we expect them to be used and refined in a very active way by users – both commissioners of evaluations using the Culture Counts system, and subscribing cultural organisations. We are also keen to generate peer inputs from across the arts and cultural sector from organisations and artists specialising in participatory work, and from the wider children and young people network in England.

### ***2.3. Likely additions and expansions of the participatory metrics frame***

The participatory metrics were designed with amateur participants in mind. It is clear to the working group that there is scope to develop further participatory metrics modules for use with professional creative practitioners involved in a participatory process.

There are a couple of relevant strands here. One module of additional metrics would be on the specific outcomes that are important to creative practitioners working in a participatory process with amateur participants, including adults and children and young people. Some of the participatory metrics developed in this pilot are clearly applicable to professional practitioners even though they have been developed with amateur participants in mind.

The other strand concerns the quality of the creative process for professional practitioners (which is inherently participatory for those involved). The Manchester metrics group, in their earlier work developing the quality of cultural experience metrics, also developed some thoughts on the quality of the creative process, with professional creative practitioners rather than amateur participants in mind. For them a vital element of artistic/creative excellence is the quality of the creative process, as judged by peers (peer review community, artists and collaborators).

The Manchester metrics group developed four outcome measures capturing the quality of creative processes: distinctiveness of practice; technical proficiency; collaborator experience; and quality and diversity of artists/workforces.

Table 1 below outlines their key suggested outcome measures for quality of creative process. They suggested that it would be useful for the cultural sector to share experiences and formalise an approach to measuring these outcomes.

It is noticeable that there is a strong overlap between some of the suggested outcome measures for collaborator experience developed by the Manchester metrics group (in terms of trust, inclusivity, stretch and creative expression) and the key outcomes in the participatory metrics developed in this pilot.

**Table 1: Quality of creative process**

| Outcome | Want peers to say |
|---------|-------------------|
|---------|-------------------|

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
| <b>Distinctiveness of practice</b>                                     | <p>'Clear artistic authorship'</p> <p>'Artistic integrity'</p> <p>'Influencing the practice of others'</p> <p>'Willingness to experiment and take risks'</p>   |
| <b>Technical proficiency</b>   | <p>'High quality of performers...'</p> <p>'High quality of production and technical staff'</p> <p>'High quality of facilities...'</p> <p>'High quality of producers and curators'</p>  |
| <b>Collaborator experience</b>   | <p>'I enhanced my reputation'</p> <p>'I was well treated'</p> <p>'I was challenged and stretched'</p> <p>'I felt safe'</p> <p>'Felt a sense of artistic chemistry'</p> <p>'I had freedom of expression'</p> <p>'High levels of mutual trust'</p> <p>'Great and clear communication'</p> <p>'Inspired by the expertise of the people I worked with'</p> <p>'A great learning environment'</p> <p>'Great audience'</p> |
| <b>Quality and diversity of artists/workforces working with/for us</b> | <p>'High quality artists/technicians, production staff want to work for them'</p> <p><i>Other (output) measures:</i></p> <p>Skills/CPD measures</p>  |

All these proposed metrics sets (participatory metrics for amateur participants including children and young people, and participatory metrics/creative process metrics for professional practitioners) could form a valuable element of a refreshed self-evaluation framework for arts organisations, and a useful prompt for dialogue between funders and funding recipients over their core creative processes.

## **Chapter 3: Process reflections and next step recommendations**

### **3.1. Overall commentary on the metric formation process**

As with the previous quality metrics work, the key challenge for the group working on this participatory metrics project was whether they would be able to generate a high degree of consensus about the key outcomes areas and matching metric statements, to capture the quality of participatory work across the arts and cultural sector. As with previous metric formation processes facilitated by Culture Counts in the UK and Australia, it was striking that the group were able to relatively quickly agree the key outcomes areas and suggested metrics statements.

### **3.2 Key insights on the challenges of deploying the participatory metrics**

The process of developing the metrics highlighted a wide range of issues about developing and deploying participatory metrics across the arts and cultural sector. As compared to using the quality of cultural experience metrics, both the 'event' frame and 'respondent' frame are more complex in participatory work.

With regard to the 'event' frame it was clear from the metric sessions that the metrics will have to be used for two broad types of participatory work:

1. Participatory work that doesn't produce an 'end product' (performance, exhibition or show).
2. Participatory work that does produce an 'end product' (performance, exhibition or show).

So for example, one of the key differences here is that participatory processes that don't produce a show are more likely to be one off or shorter engagements with the participants. In contrast participatory processes that culminate in a show or performance are likely to be more prolonged engagements between the cultural organisation/producer and the participants. This does not necessarily mean that in all cases these longer engagements will be more intense or immersive experiences, but they are more likely to be, and this is likely to affect participant response to the metrics set that has been developed (for example in terms of participant response to the intensity and depth of skill acquisition outcomes).

This diversity of participatory process also means that the respondent frame is much more complicated for participatory work than the more straightforward self, peer and public respondent categories for the quality of cultural experience metrics. So for example, for a participatory process with a performance element, peers (observer of both process and show) would complete a process survey (quality of participatory process) and a quality of experience (product) survey. In this situation the self-assessment (organiser/curator) process could operate as follows:

1. They would complete a prior self-assessment of the process (one set of predicted scores for the dimensions) – against which peer (observer) and participant (amateur) scores would be compared.
2. Where there is a performance outcome they would conduct a prior assessment of the performance.
3. They would then complete a creative intention/reflection process once all the data comes in on both the quality of the participatory process and the performance.

In this sense the self-assessors would be setting out what they hope to achieve through the participatory process by predicting participant scores and the quality of the cultural product through predicting peer and public scores.

Finally in terms of the evaluation of participatory process, where the engagement is prolonged (for example Matthew Bourne/New Adventures undertook a six month engagement processes with the amateur boys involved in their *Lord of the Flies* productions around the country), this opens up the possibility of multiple evaluation points through the process, yielding potentially useful longitudinal data. For example, in the case of *Lord of the Flies*, if the participatory metrics had been ready earlier Matthew Bourne/New Adventures could have chosen to carry out an evaluation at the beginning, middle and end of the processes.

### **3.3. Towards a core set of participatory metrics**

The group of cultural organisations involved in developing these participatory metrics discussed at some length whether at this stage of the metric development process it would be worth attempting to define a core set of participatory metrics, and a list of recommended additional outcome/metric statement options.

The view of the group was that it is too early in the development of the participatory metrics to undertake such a task, notwithstanding the observation made earlier that the 'core' set for participatory metrics will inevitably contain more dimensions than the equivalent set for the quality of cultural experience given the breadth and diversity of participatory work across the arts and cultural sector.

The participatory metrics will need to be tested across a range of different artforms, sizes and scale of organisations and work, and rural and urban settings. It would also be useful to work with umbrella groups on their further development, for example with regional dance agencies or those pulling together independent artists and practitioners.

Defining a core set will become a more meaningful task once that testing has been carried out, and we have developed a better understanding about which of the metrics work best in the greater majority of settings, and which work less well. Looking ahead, as the Culture Counts platform develops different survey templates with users, one option would be to populate a core set of metrics, but to also offer other recommended and fully developed modules of additional questions (so for example around skills and progression, authenticity, belonging, etc).

The group welcomed this approach and noted that another reason why this is likely to be a fruitful development path is that some elements of the participatory metrics, particularly around progression and skills acquisition, will be shaped and influenced by other expert groups. For example cultural organisations will continue to work with schools and colleges as they collaborate around the creative curriculum. Those exchanges are an important expert input into the ongoing development of particular modules of dimensions within a larger set of participatory metrics. For example, one of

the group members asked the question, 'why couldn't the participatory metrics continue to be developed so that they could be used in a two hour GSCE drama lesson?'

With these thoughts in mind the group noted how it will be very important to develop high quality user guidelines, which will support cultural organisations on how to choose the right metrics and evaluation approach in line with what the participatory work is trying to achieve. Group members noted that, particularly with participatory processes, creative practitioners have a strong practical interest in what worked and what didn't in a given participatory engagement, and they are likely to develop additional metric statements that provide further insights into the dynamics of their particular artform specific work.

### **3.4. Other key reflections by the working group**

At the final meeting the group reflected on the whole process; on the findings from the two test event evaluations and on the ongoing development of the participatory metrics. Their key reflections were as follows:

#### ***3.4.1. Getting the recruitment and induction process right***

Perhaps unsurprisingly given that this was the first time we had used the participatory metrics, the participating cultural organisations felt that we needed to be much slicker with the recruitment and induction process of both self assessors and the participants, with opening invitations and guidance that was:

- simpler to understand as to what they were being asked to do as respondents in the evaluation
- very clear on explaining the 'why', in terms of why amateur and professional participants alike would want to get involved in an evaluation using the metrics

#### **3.4.2. How the timing of when you ask a question could affect outcomes scores**

Matthew Bourne/New Adventures had reflected on some of the scores they had received for key participatory metric dimensions, for example the voice outcome, 'my ideas were taken seriously.' The amateur dancers in our evaluation were asked this question midway through rehearsals, when they were learning the steps for the piece ('blocking' choreography). This was one of the most directed and least discretionary elements of the process, so New Adventures were unsurprised that the 'voice' dimension, when asked at this point in the participatory process, got the lowest participant score (admittedly amongst a very high scoring set of results) in their evaluation findings. When this same question on voice was asked of the amateur participants at the end of the project they reported much higher scores (see Appendix 4).

This underlines the importance of when evaluation questions are asked, and the potential benefits (in longer participatory engagement processes) of asking evaluation questions at the beginning, middle and end of a process, or indeed some months after it

has finished and participants have had a chance to reflect on any lasting legacies and impressions from taking part.

### **3.4.3. The use of the metrics in different participatory processes**

The group discussed how the reaction to the metrics will also be shaped quite distinctively by participatory processes where there is a show element, compared to those where there is not – or where the participatory engagement process is prolonged over a number of weeks or months as opposed to a short one-off participatory experience. So for example it was noted with regard to the ‘stretch’ dimension – ‘I did something I didn’t know I was capable of’ – that it may be the case that the opportunity to achieve high scores for this dimension are likely to be greater in those participatory processes which culminate in a show element. Similarly, the longer and more intense the participatory engagement, the more likely it is that participants have the opportunity to experience strong growth (if the process is well run) in the metrics concerned with skill acquisition, confidence and so on.

As noted above, the best way of exploring these potential interactions is through further testing of the participatory metrics in different participatory processes and settings.

### **3.4.4. The use of the participatory metrics with children and young people**

A key element of further piloting of the metrics will be their use and adaption with children and young people of different ages. Clearly this type of survey approach will be inappropriate for very young children, and for children under 12 or 13 years of age some of the questions may need to be tweaked or modified for ease of understanding.

Another interesting issue here is whether they are being used with groups of children of broadly the same age, or with groups of children and young people with a wider age range. This latter scenario was the case with the Matthew Bourne/New Adventures production of *Lord of the Flies*. The amateur dancers involved in the production were aged between 10 and 22 years old – which made for a very wide range of experiences and skills. New Adventures reported that because of the very good relationships between the amateur dancers the younger boys were happy to ask the older boys for help when they needed assistance in understanding a question. In this sense the process of understanding the task created its own participatory dynamics. But it also underlines the important of refining the metrics so that they require the minimum level of explanation to aid understanding whatever the age group using them.

The working group involved in this metric formation exercise are hopeful that cultural organisations within the wider children and young people network group will have views and suggestions on how to best to develop and refine the metrics, both in terms of focus and in the expression of particular dimensions for different age groups. The metrics will also need to be field tested with children and young people. Culture Counts will of course continue to work with users to those ends as the participatory metrics are used more widely.

### **3.4.5. The strengths and limits of this kind of approach**

The group also discussed how to best calibrate this kind of approach with other evaluation questions and challenges. So for example it was discussed how survey based approaches of this kind can be very effective at 'capturing a moment' in terms of a particular person's experience of a participatory process. But for some participatory work, and the supporters of that work, the key outcomes may be less about 'in the moment' participatory experiences, and much more about the longer term legacy of the work – for example people getting on better in particular communities, or opening up new spaces for debate and exchange. Clearly these types of wider outcomes will continue to require additional quantitative and qualitative evaluation strategies and activities.

The group discussed how a particular community of interest (community leaders, teachers, etc) could be given their own logins to a system like Culture Counts, and questions could be developed to track and measure the 'legacy' impacts of particular types of participatory processes. But the key issue moving forward will be to provide clarity to potential users of the benefits of particular types of evaluation approaches over others, and the ongoing need to use any particular method within a well defined overall evaluation strategy that closely reflects a particular organisation's key aims and objectives for its work.

### **3.4.6. Data representation and reporting**

Finally the group discussed how the resulting data can best be reported back to cultural organisations to ensure that it is a powerful starting point for conversations both within the organisation and with their participants. There are a number of important issues here. Firstly, how to balance narrative reporting mechanisms alongside summary data charts in the automated reporting features of the Culture Counts system.

Secondly, how to build algorithms and automated reporting functions that are designed to flag interesting patterns in the findings, and which should act as a natural prompt to critical reflection and discussion. A key insight emerging from the Arts Council England/ Arts and Humanities Research Council/NESTA Digital R&D project supporting the ongoing development of the metrics, is about how the design and interface of the automatic reporting function is going to be vital, not just to the functionality and the perceived value of the service to users, but also to embedding data driven decisions within a cultural organisation using the Culture Counts platform. Cultural organisations need to be seduced by the data as a first stage. The second stage will be for them to automatically start using the data in their reflective and planning processes, and this will lead to more data driven decision-making across the whole cultural sector.

This will require Culture Counts to build a cluster of algorithms that will automatically report data (depending on results) that will intrigue the user and trigger reflections on their part. As Culture Counts have worked with organisations here and in Australia, discussing their results with them and how they have used the data, it is clear that the more interesting, and unusual findings are when:

- peer pre event scores are lower than their post event scores – ie their expectations are significantly surpassed (in our experience thus far the normal pattern is in the other direction), whether that be about a participatory process or a show
- there are high standard deviations reported for an individual dimension response, signifying the audience or participants were divided on that particular dimension measure
- self assessors are consistently over-estimating likely public and peer scores (suggesting that their expectations in terms of creative intention/participant process are significantly out of alignment with peer and public response)
- there is a large discrepancy between peer and public scores, suggesting that the appeal and impact of the experience varied depending on the audience's level of prior knowledge and experience of the artform

The relevance and accessibility of these algorithms will be particularly important for those cultural organisations with low levels of data analysis and interpretation skills.

## **Chapter 4: Conclusions**

The most significant challenge of this project was to work quickly to co-produce, develop and agree a set of outcomes and metric statements for assessing the quality of participatory work across the arts and cultural sector. Overall, the co-production

process worked very well and the workshop sessions sparked a number of reflections on the further development and deployment of the metrics that are very valuable in their own right.

The necessary next stage is to take the participatory metrics and undertake a round of further testing across a range of different artforms, different types of participatory experience, different sizes and scale of organisations and participatory work, different sets of participants with varying characteristics and backgrounds, and across rural and urban settings. The working group that has produced the participatory metrics are keen for them to be widely discussed and piloted across the art and cultural sector. By working in partnership with Arts Council England, cultural organisations within the children and young people network, and with relevant umbrella groups and development agencies (regional dance agencies, music hubs, Sound and Music and other similar organisations), we are hopeful that the metrics receive a wide range of peer inputs and feedback with a particular emphasis on children and young people piloting.

There is already significant interest in the participatory metrics from across the arts and cultural sector, and the ongoing Arts Council England/Arts and Humanities Research Council/NESTA Digital R&D award to support the development of these metrics and the quality of cultural experience metrics, provides an excellent opportunity to facilitate more testing of the metrics over the next six months.

## **Appendix 1: The Participatory Metrics Group Consortium members**

Tom Andrews (People United)

Catherine Bunting  
Matt Fenton (Contact Theatre)  
Leanne Jones (20 Stories High)  
John Knell (Culture Counts)  
Ben Lee (Shared Intelligence)  
James MacKenzie Blackman (Matthew Bourne/New Adventures)  
Jacqui O'Hanlon (RSC)  
Rae Seymour (RSC)  
Caroline Sharp (NFER)  
Tina Taylor (20 Stories High)

Amy Turton from Arts Council England attended some of the consortium meeting as an observer.

Ben Lee and Caroline Sharp were included in the group as peer experts. Both Ben and Caroline have been involved at various stages in the development of the Children and Young People Principles adopted by Arts Council England, and were therefore a vital source of expertise on alignment and fit between the proposed participatory metrics and the children and young people principles.

## **Appendix 2: Summary notes from the participatory metrics session**

### ***Introduction***

As noted in chapter 1, over the course of the first three sessions the group developed and identified a key cluster of outcomes that are a feature of high quality participatory work.

What follows is a summary of our key discussion notes, which we circulated between sessions to inform our ongoing development of the outcome areas and metric statements.

The notes are therefore presented in a short form summary format.

### ***Key themes/outcome areas***

After the first three sessions the outcome areas clustered around the following key themes/outcome areas:

1. Trust/authenticity/mutual respect
2. Stretch (degree of challenge)
3. Progression
4. Group dynamics/feeling involved
5. Execution
6. Legacy
7. Experiential

Our discussion notes for each outcome area are as follows:

- **Trust/authenticity/mutual respect**
  - Covers the quality of relationships; how you are treated as an individual; being treated seriously'; 'a safe space'; 'being treated as a creative person in my own right.'
  - Institutional value attached to the work (not an 'add on' to normal work. A meaningful and valued part of a company's work).
  - Ability to experience (transparently and legibly) a professional creative process.
- **Stretch (degree of challenge)** – scale and ambition of project comes in here; personal challenge and stretch; related to degree of sense of achievement; broadening sense of what's possible for your personally; broadening skills etc
- **Progression** – skills; curiosity; imagination
- **Group dynamics** – opportunity to make friendships; make connections; meet people different from you; role models; being part of something bigger; individual and shared narratives – and purpose; belonging; being part of 'a family/company'

- **Execution** – was it well organised? Did the timing and pace of it feel right? ‘It was well designed for me and the group.’ Quality of creative welcome/clarity of process and outcomes/clarity of communications and rigour of engagement/application of a rigorous creative process (exploring and explaining rigour with the participants)
- **Legacy** – changed views of themselves, the artform and the creative process; being motivated to do something in the future; future agency and intention; intention to attend in the future
- **Experiential** – quality of involvement (excitement/inspiration/intensity of relationship, experience)

### **What is particularly characteristic about participatory work in the cultural sector?**

The group also discussed what is particularly characteristic about participatory work as a route to both refining the emerging outcome areas above, and to identify other potential important outcomes that would need to be captured by the metric set. We were keen to access how and in what ways participatory engagements in arts and culture are distinctive compared to other participatory activities in other sectors. The key dynamics discussed were:

- the potential to deliver hard edged and tangible outcomes
- confidence, self-worth, belonging, community
- tangible skills, creative practice insights
- emotions, empathy, putting yourself in other people’s shoes, feelings of anger, joy etc
- ‘giving of yourself and your identity’, expressing something personal/profound of yourself, something on the line, something personal at stake
- connection, social identity – if you’re working with a group and revealing something of yourself, that process can successfully break down barriers between people (classes, backgrounds etc)
- skills and learning – the role model element is important – narrative and stories that can inspire you – or social stories/dynamics in making a piece that bring people together
- rehearsal; reinvention; trialing; proto-typing; critical reflection processes (often brutal and public) – potentially unique to cultural environments
- social skills in performing something together
- values – seeing yourself in the world, challenging what you see in the world
- communication – being able to communicate your ideas – really strongly felt within arts and cultural work – put across an emotion without writing it down – ‘communicate in the language of the artform’

### **Appendix 3: The development of the participatory metrics statements – session note summaries**

The summary slides that follow give examples of how the standardised metric statements were developed for each of the different outcome clusters capturing the quality of participatory activity across the arts and cultural sector.

They give insights into the root essence of some of the final outcome areas and metric statements, and how the metrics statements were refined and developed.

## Outcome = Authorship (part of Authenticity)

*Outcome essence*

**Authorship** →

• *Proposed metric statements (participants)*

'I was treated as an equal'

'My ideas were taken seriously'

'I helped the project succeed'

'The organisers really cared about this project'

'I was able to express myself creatively'

## Outcome = safe space / support (Authenticity)

*Outcome essence*

**Safe space**  
**Support** →  
**Mutuality**

• *Proposed metric statements (participants)*

'Everybody in the group supported each other'

'I received honest and helpful feedback'

I felt like I could be myself'

'I tried things even though they made me feel uncomfortable'

## Outcome = Stretch

*Outcome essence*

Degree of  
ambition →  
Sense of  
achievement

• *Proposed metric statements  
(participants)*

'I was amazed about what we achieved'

'I felt part of something significant & important'  
*(being part of something 'bigger' idea)*

'I did something I didn't know I was capable of'  
*Or*

'I surprised myself about what I was able to do'



## Outcome = Progression

Outcome essence

Skills acquisition  
(generic) →

• Proposed metric statements  
(participants)

'I felt I gained new skills'

'I improved my skills'

'I found something new that I am good at'

'I learnt a lot about myself'

Or

'I learned something new about myself'

## Outcome = Progression

Outcome essence

Artistic skills →

• Proposed metric statements  
(participants)

'I improved my artistic skills'

'I have a greater understanding of the creative process'

'I am more able to tell a story or convey meaning creatively' (*too wordy*)

Or

'I now feel more able to express myself creatively'

'I have a greater understanding of what artists do'

## Outcome = Group dynamic / involvement

*Outcome essence*

Group dynamic /  
involvement, →  
belonging

• *Proposed metric statements  
(participants)*

'I was made to feel part of the team'  
I felt bonded with the other people  
involved in the project'

'I got to know people who are  
different from me'

'I felt willing to make sacrifices for the  
group'

'Everyone worked together to achieve  
a common goal'

## Outcome = Execution

*Outcome essence*

Practical  
execution, →  
clarity,  
appropriateness

• *Proposed metric statements  
(participants)*

'I was clear about what we were all here  
to do' (*clarity of intention*)

'The project was well organised'

'The organisers responded well to the  
needs of the group'

'The organisers really understood the  
needs of the group'

'The project was well designed to meet  
the needs of the group'

## Outcome = Legacy

*Outcome essence*

Future  
intention,  
agency  
curiosity,  
confidence



• *Proposed metric statements (participants)*

'I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future'

'I would be keen to take part in an activity like this again'

'I feel more confident about doing new things'

'I feel more connected to XXX' (art, music, dance etc)

*And some open text field questions e.g.:*

'Because of this project I feel differently about.....'

'Because of this project I am going to....'

## Outcome = Experiential

*Outcome essence*

Engagement,  
excitement, →  
intensity

• *Proposed metric statements (participants)*

'I felt deeply involved in the process'

'It was an exciting experience'

'I felt inspired by the project'

*Open text field question:*

'What three words best describe how you felt about your experience?'

And use relevant metrics from the quality of experience metrics

## Experiential metric statements

- We can also use some of the original 'quality of experience' dimensions questions here – although one or two may have to be rebadged (for data base reasons) as below – for e.g.
- *Novelty:* 'It was different from things I've experienced before'
- *Provoking:* 'It was thought provoking'
- *Personal:* 'It meant something to me personally'

## Appendix 4: Headline findings from test events using the participatory metrics

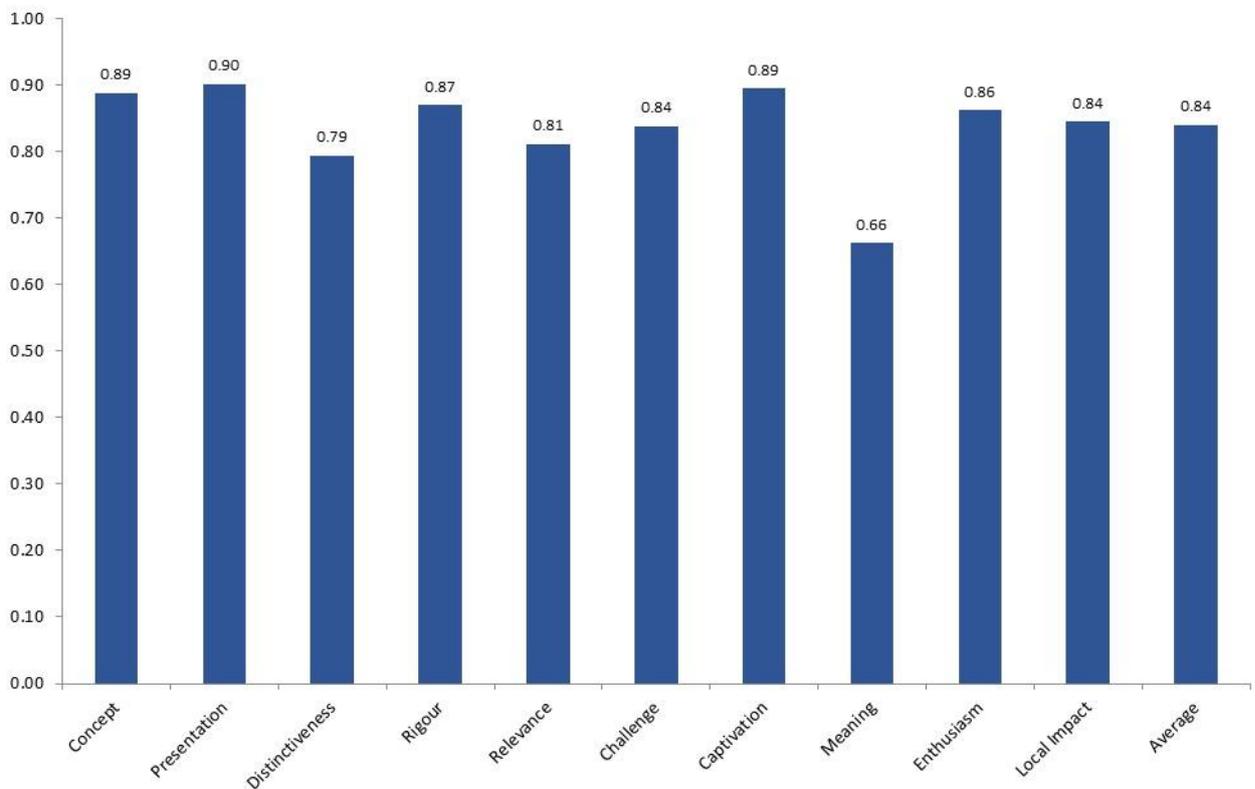
### Introduction

We piloted the new participatory metrics at two test events. The headline findings for both of those test events follow below.

### Quality metrics

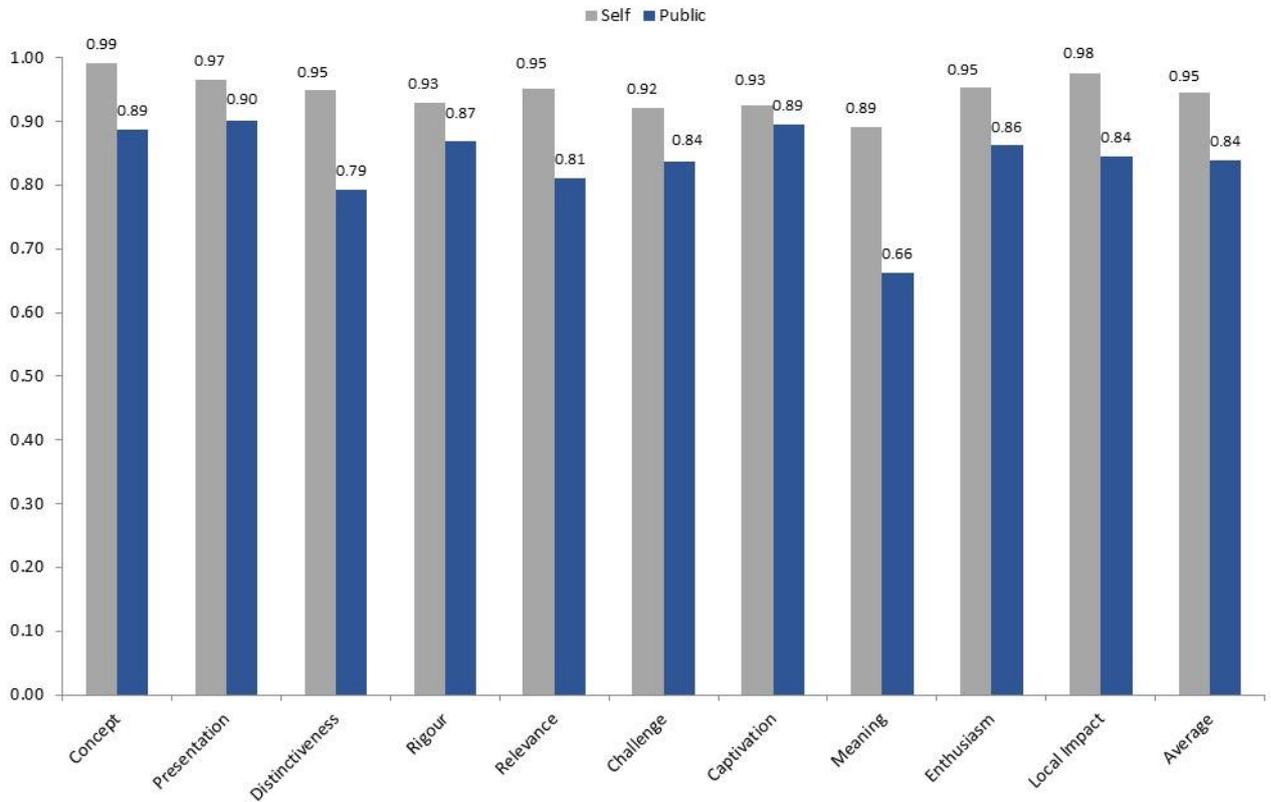
#### Summary charts for *Lord of the Flies* by Matthew Bourne/New Adventures

#### Average public scores for *Lord of the Flies* performance



*n*=151

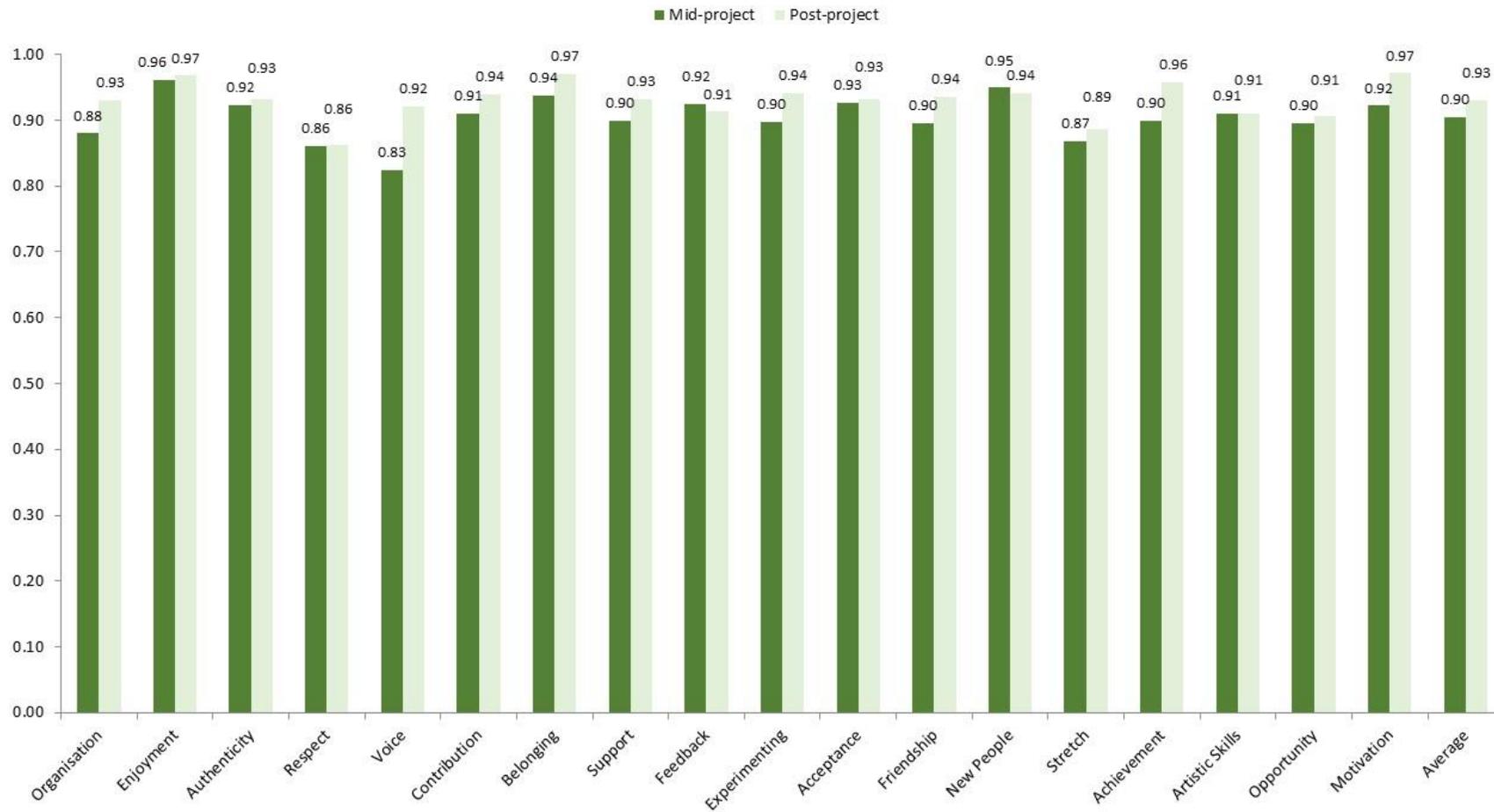
## Comparison of public scores against company objectives for *Lord of the Flies* performance



*Self* n=8

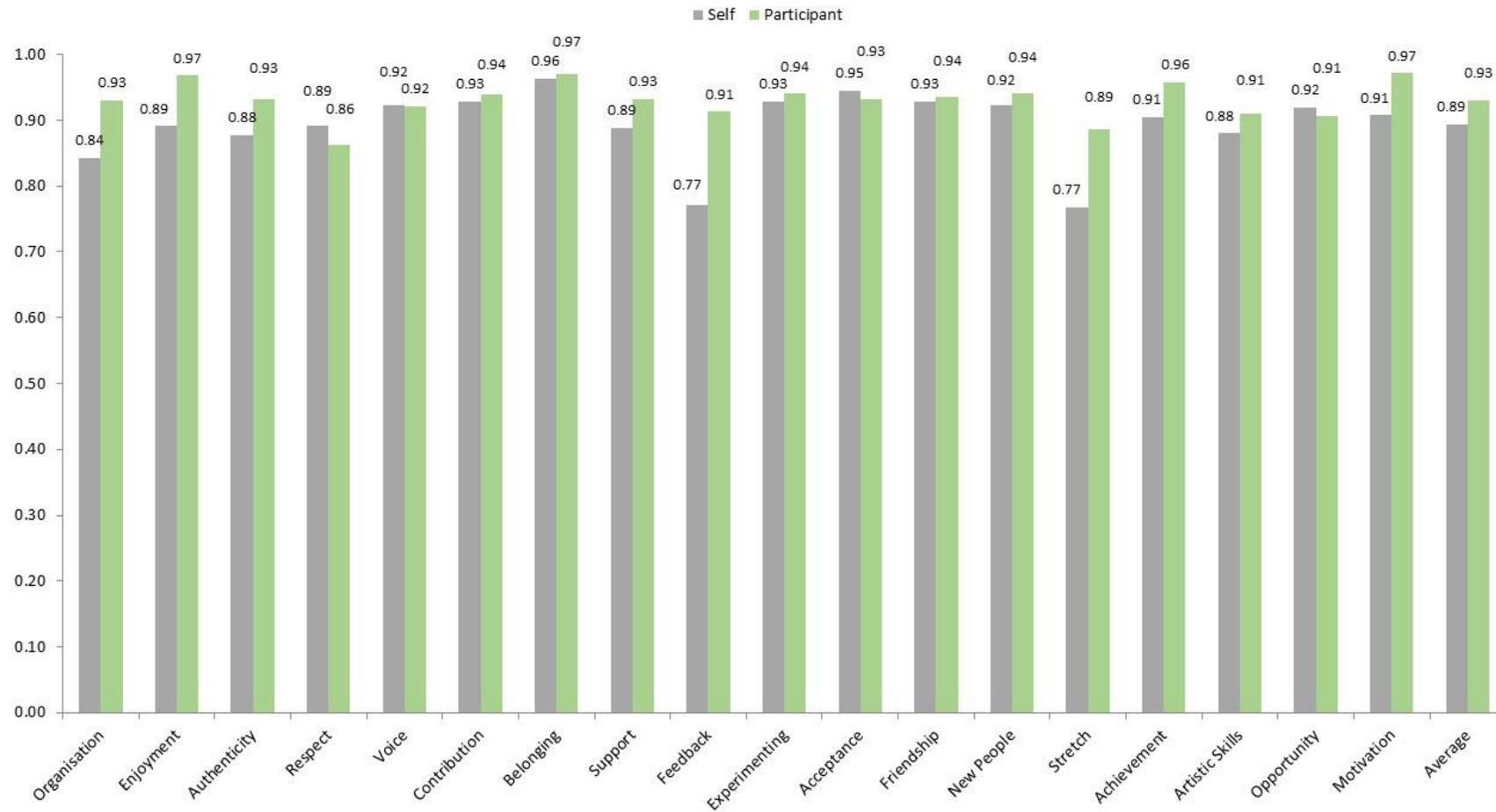
*Public* n=151

## Average mid-project and post-project participant scores for *Lord of the Flies* participation



Participant mid-project n=22  
Participant post-project n=14

## Comparison of participant post-project scores against company objectives for *Lord of the Flies* participation



*Self* n=10

*Participant post-project* n=14

**Lord of the Flies performance word cloud from public responses**



**Lord of the Flies participation word cloud from participant responses**



## Summary of qualitative data

### 1. Public views on the involvement of young people

Audience members were asked whether they were aware that some of the cast were local young men, some of whom had never danced before. Of the 146 people who answered this question, 113 or 77 per cent were aware of the involvement of local young people. All respondents were then asked whether knowing about the background of the cast members made them feel differently about the show in any way. The majority of respondents felt that this was an important and positive aspect of the production. Many people appreciated the opportunity the boys had been given to perform with a prestigious company and emphasised the importance of involving and developing local young talent:

'Fabulous opportunity for fantastic local youngsters to demonstrate their brilliant talent to a wider audience'

'Delighted that young people have the opportunities to be part of a professional show – and to such a high standard'

'I thought it was fantastic for local people to work with such a talented company'

'So good to have local young talent on show. What an amazing experience for them. An opportunity for them which could shape their future'

Several respondents noted that the involvement of local talent was good for the community, and contributed to the development of dance as an artform:

'Good for the community and gets kids doing things'

'I think bringing local people into productions makes it even more relevant to the local community, and involving young people hopefully ensures the future of the theatre for years to come, by making them interested at an early age'

'Involving local people, particularly young men, in dance must be good for the future of dance by encouraging participation at such a high level'

Many people felt that the use of a non-professional cast had enhanced their enjoyment of the show. They took pride in the abilities of the boys and were moved by their immersion in the performance and the relationship between the boys and professional dancers on the stage. Several people commented that the involvement of local young people helped the work to feel more relevant, and others felt that it contributed to an exciting atmosphere in the theatre:

'Observing the total involvement of young people from challenging backgrounds was powerful and positive. The mentoring, involvement and commitment of the professional dancers was a genuine example of society healing and helping itself. An absolute triumph.'

'I was very impressed by how well they had been rehearsed and how much they were completely on board with and engaged by the story. As a dance teacher myself I try to watch the 'whole' production...I think you can often judge the overall quality of a production by the quality of the non-principal characters. I was very impressed by how completely 'into' the story the boys were and how much they believed in what they were doing. So I think that the production team and those taking the boys' rehearsals deserve a special commendation.'

'What an excellent opportunity for young locals to experience a professional production and to play such a big part in it. It was obvious how they trusted the professional dancers and how the professionals looked after the local boys.'

'It made me more impressed with the production and also gave it a sense of excitement which spread from the cast to the audience. At some points the atmosphere tingled!'

'I could feel the great enthusiasm on the stage from the performers...and also off the stage among the audience too'

'The mix of professional and local talent on stage was exhilarating'

Some respondents felt that the involvement of local talent might have made the show appealing and accessible to a wider audience, and several people explained that they had come to see the show because they knew someone in the cast:

'My son auditioned for it and two of the successful boys were from the town where we live. We probably wouldn't have gone to see it if it hadn't been the case'

'I specifically came to the show as one of my friends who lived locally was in the show'

'I think the use of male local raw talent is very good and makes it more accessible to a wider audience and it was good to see that although some came from private education there were some young men from inner city schools'

Several respondents commented that the involvement of local young people hadn't made them feel differently about the show because they had enjoyed the work on its own terms, and felt that the non-professional dancers integrated seamlessly:

'I think it is a great idea, but it doesn't change that the whole piece is to be applauded'

'No, because the local boys and the professional dancers combined perfectly'

## **2. Additional comments from members of the public**

Many audience members took the opportunity to provide further feedback in the 'additional comments' box at the end of the survey. Many respondents used this space to reiterate how much they and their family members and friends had enjoyed the show, and several people commented that they had found themselves thinking or talking about it afterwards:

'I wasn't sure what to expect from this production but to say I loved it is an understatement. From the second it started I was gripped. I have a very limited knowledge of dance but a production such as this was so well thought out and delivered so expertly that it didn't matter. The young men in the production were superb, as was the music, stage direction, lighting – everything! The whole experience was amazing and the next day at work I enthused about *Lord of the Flies* to everyone I spoke to. I will definitely look out for productions like this one in the future.'

'It was a brilliant performance. Both adults, a 17-year-old and three under 12s were totally absorbed and moved by this show, and I don't think we have ever talked about a show as much after the performance'

'An amazing night of theatre. Modern dance at its very best'

'Phenomenal performances by a truly outstanding cast throughout the whole age range...absolutely bowled over'

Several people experienced the show as a powerful interpretation of a well-known novel:

'It brought the novel (that continues to be only too relevant) to a new audience in a deeply engaging way'

'I read the book at O-level, taught it for several years to disillusioned students, I've seen both movies but this brought the passion alive for me. Thank you'

A handful of people expressed some disappointment with the show. Some had expected a more traditional ballet, or a Matthew Bourne production more like those they had experienced before; others didn't know the story well and as a result found the narrative hard to follow:

'Advertised as a ballet I was expecting a ballet because *Swan Lake* was so fantastic. It was more modern dance. The setting in a theatre didn't work for me either. All in all it was disappointing'

'I don't think this was Mathew Bourne's strongest production...not as visually arresting as other performances nor as witty'

'I would been helped by a programme synopsis...seemed to be an assumption that you had read book recently'

Overall, however, there was general praise for the Matthew Bourne company and for the Alhambra Theatre:

'Matthew Bourne and his dancers are an inspiration, making what many consider 'stuffy' accessible and relevant to new audiences'

'Matthew Bourne always delivers an excellent performance, taking the essence of the story and making it relevant to people now'

'I admire Matthew Bourne and the theatre for encouraging this'

'It was an amazing experience. I travelled from Nottingham to see it because it is not available there. Well done, Alhambra'

'I love the Alhambra. Always a pleasure to be a guest there. Thank you to all the lovely staff and organisers of these events. See you in 2015!'

'Glad that Bradford took a chance on such a risky project. I think a lot of theatres didn't'

### 3. Comments from participants

Participants completed the survey twice, once mid-way through the project during rehearsals and again after the final performance was over. Both surveys included space for the young men to make comments. Overall participants were hugely positive about their experiences. At the mid-project stage participants were particularly struck by the experience of working with professional dancers and a number of respondents commented on how the project was helping them to meet new people:

*'Lord of the Flies* is a great experience because it involves professional dancers and local boys all doing the same thing. Working with the professionals is great because you can see what you can aspire to'

*'Lord of the Flies* has been a great experience and I have tried things that I have never tried before. I never knew dancing could be so much fun and I have met loads of new people that I have become close to'

However, one participant felt that there was some 'distance' between the professional and non-professional dancers, and was feeling a little unconfident about his involvement in the project:

'I do not feel as though the local lads involved in the project and the professionals have integrated too well...maybe due to lack of fun and creative games and activities before intensive rehearsals commence which inevitably get a little serious and stressful at times and is not the best atmosphere to bond with one another. In addition, I cannot help but feel a little undermined from time to time'

After the project was over participants were clearly amazed by what they had experienced and achieved. A number of respondents described how welcoming and supportive the professional team had been:

'I absolutely loved the experience and couldn't be more grateful! Amazing amazing amazing!'

'An absolutely breath-taking experience, that's all I have to say'

'I enjoyed everything, especially at show week. The setting was great and all the cast was really nice and welcoming, working with the professionals was good too because they were all really nice and easy to talk to. Overall *Lord of the Flies* was the best experience I've ever had'

'The project just gets better and better the longer you are on it. Even after the last show, the buzz and adrenaline still courses through you. Though it is sad that it is over, it feels amazing to say "Hey, I was in Matthew Bourne's *Lord of the Flies*!"'

'All the cast and crew and everyone involved made me feel like I could achieve anything and all made me very welcome as if I was a pro'

'I felt 'lost' after the last show. It would be great to have the opportunity to get together for other projects, maybe with other *Lord of the Flies* boys from other regions too'

(Note that the participant who expressed concerns at mid-project stage did not complete the post-event survey, so it is not possible to see whether his feelings changed as the project progressed.)

Finally, the post-project survey asked participants whether they would do anything different as a result of their experience. Of the 14 respondents, 12 felt that the experience would impact on their future attitude, behaviour and plans. For some respondents this was about developing their interest and involvement in dance; others felt that the experience would motivate them to focus, work hard and continue to challenge themselves:

'I'm currently training towards a career in performing arts so the project didn't really change my career path. However, the project motivated me to become more focused on my training so the experience will help me to change how I approach my work'

'Yes I would love to do more shows and put more time into production work'

'My outlook into the dance world has been altered. I now have a stronger confidence when it comes to facing auditions. I know I will keep in contact with the friends I have made on the project – unlike with other dance productions where distance makes relationships fizzle out over time'

'I have researched different dance genres, attended lots more dance shows and made contact with local dance schools. I am attending my first ballet class in the new year with Northern Ballet!'

'More motivated and will continue to pursue the arts for the rest of my life '

'Push myself to try other new things'

'Work harder to be like the professionals'

'Yes, I will always take everything as serious and professional as I did *Lord of the Flies*'

## **Definitions of quality dimensions**

### **Performance – self and public**

Concept: it was an interesting idea

Presentation: it was well produced and presented

Distinctiveness: it was different from things I've experienced before

Rigour: it was well thought through and put together

Relevance: it had something to say about the world in which we live

Challenge: it was thought-provoking

Captivation: it was absorbing and held my attention

Meaning: it meant something to me personally

Enthusiasm: I would come to something like this again

Local impact: it is important that it's happening here

### **Participation – self and participant**

Organisation: the project was well organised

Enjoyment: I had a good time

Authenticity: it felt like a real artistic experience

Respect: I was treated as an equal

Voice: my ideas were taken seriously

Contribution: I felt like my contribution mattered

Belonging: they made me feel part of the team

Support: people in the group supported each other

Feedback: I got helpful feedback

Experimenting: I felt comfortable trying new things

Acceptance: I felt like I could be myself

Friendship: I felt close to other people involved in the project

New people: I got to know people who are different to me

Stretch: I did something I didn't know I was capable of

Achievement: I was amazed by what we achieved

Artistic skills: I improved my artistic skills

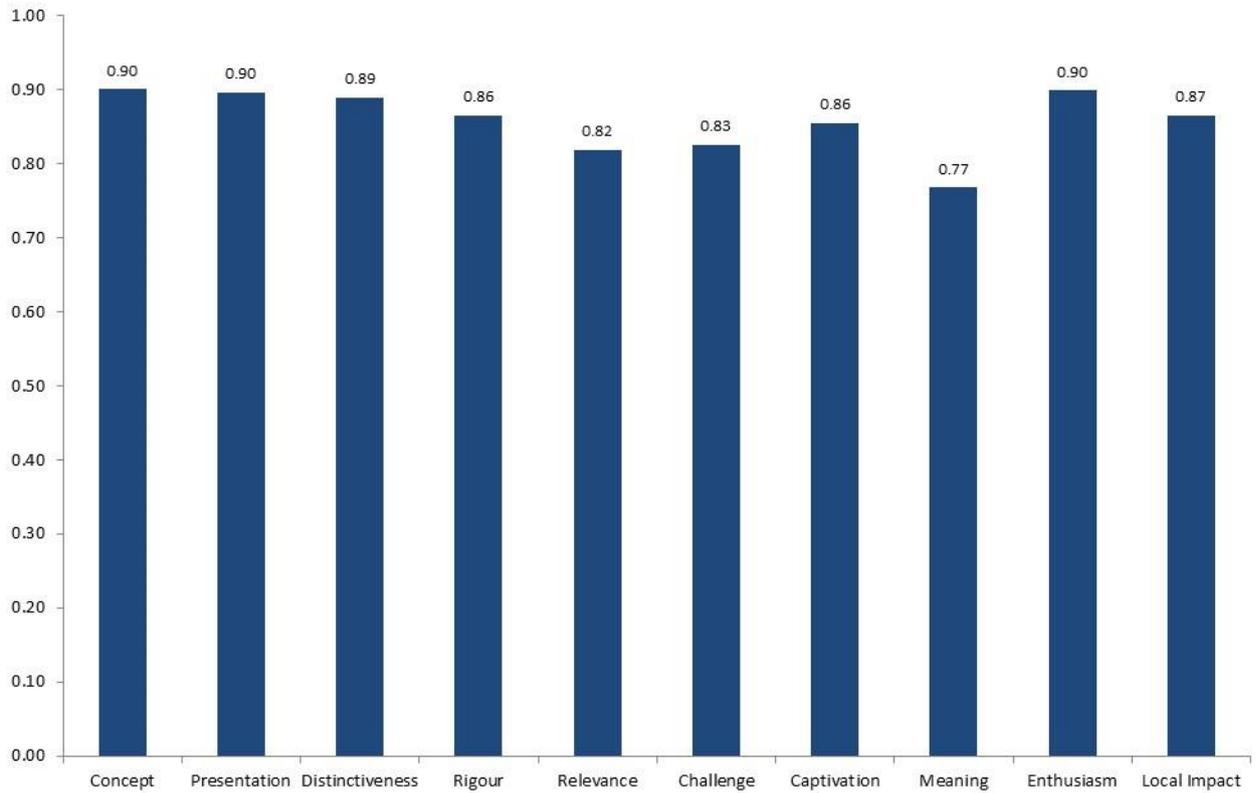
Opportunity: the project opened up new opportunities for me

Motivation: I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future

## Quality metrics

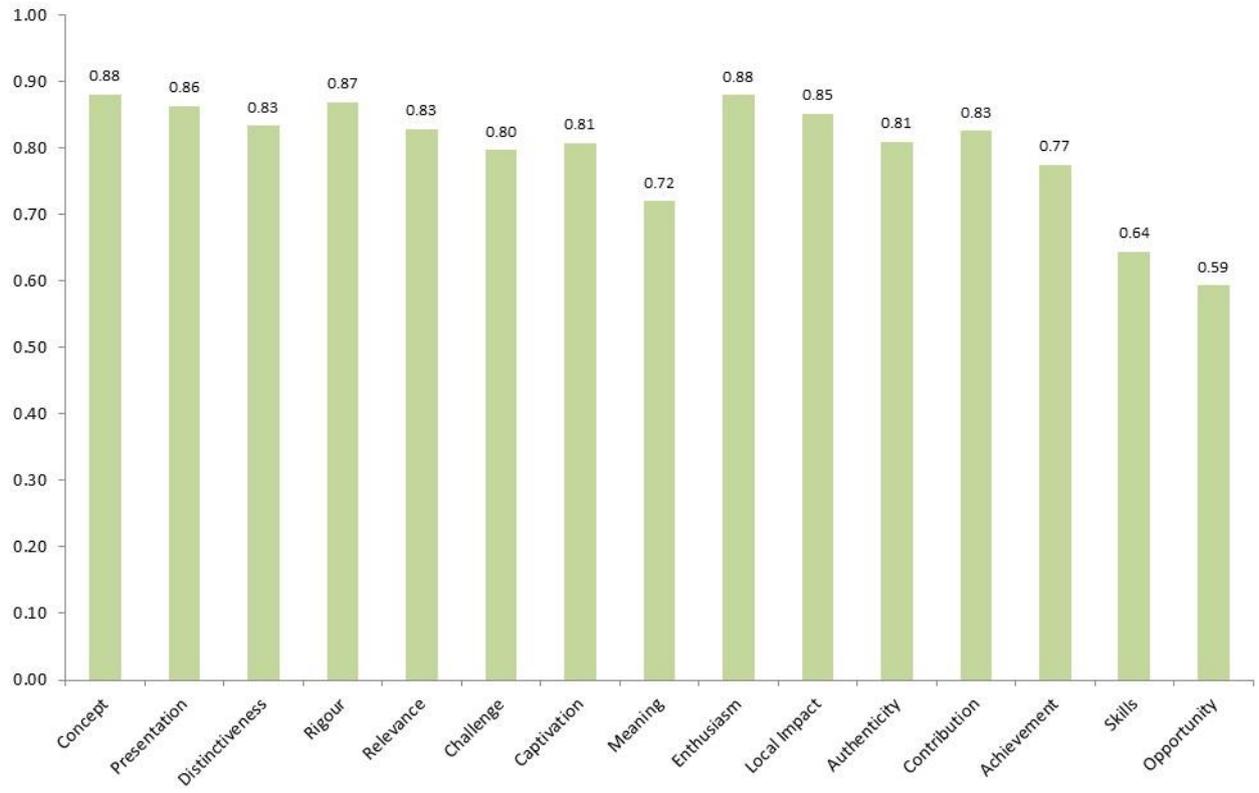
### Summary charts for *Wonderstruck* by People United and Manchester Museum

#### Average public scores for *Wonderstruck*



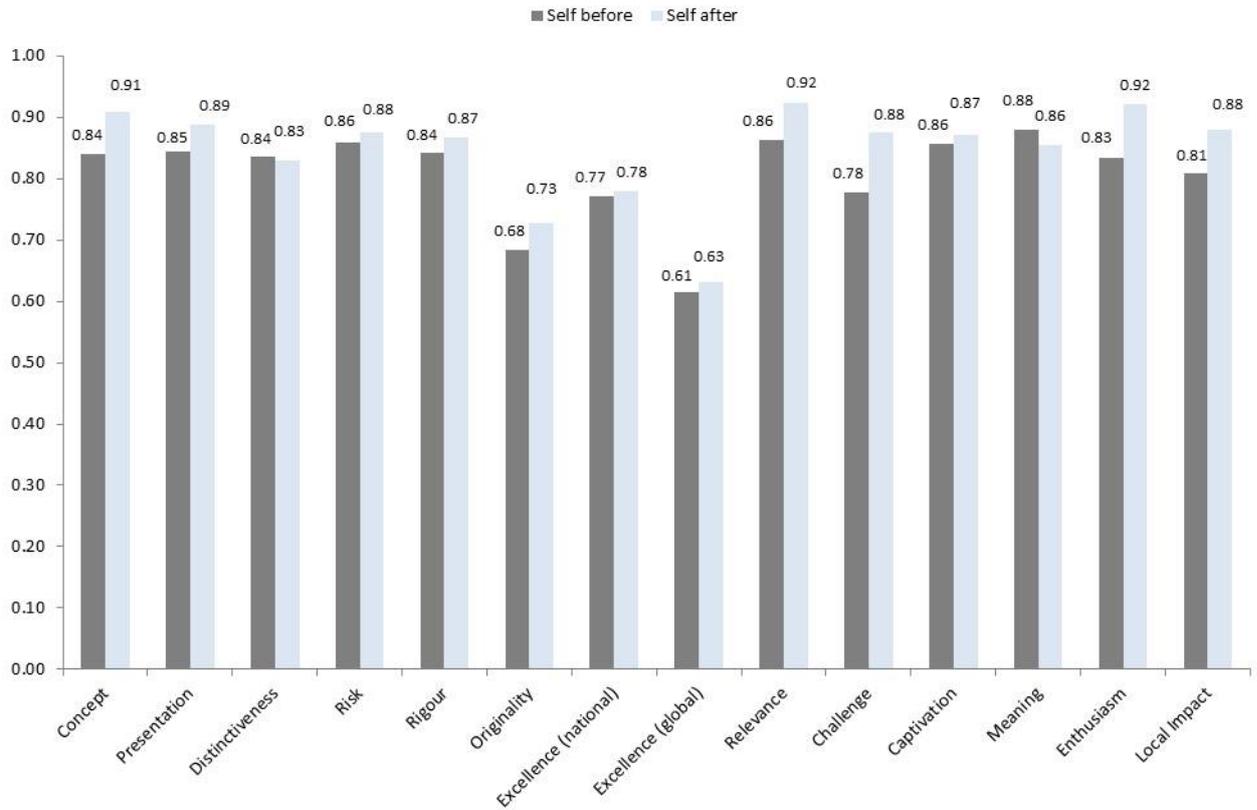
*n*=37

### Average participant scores for *Wonderstruck*



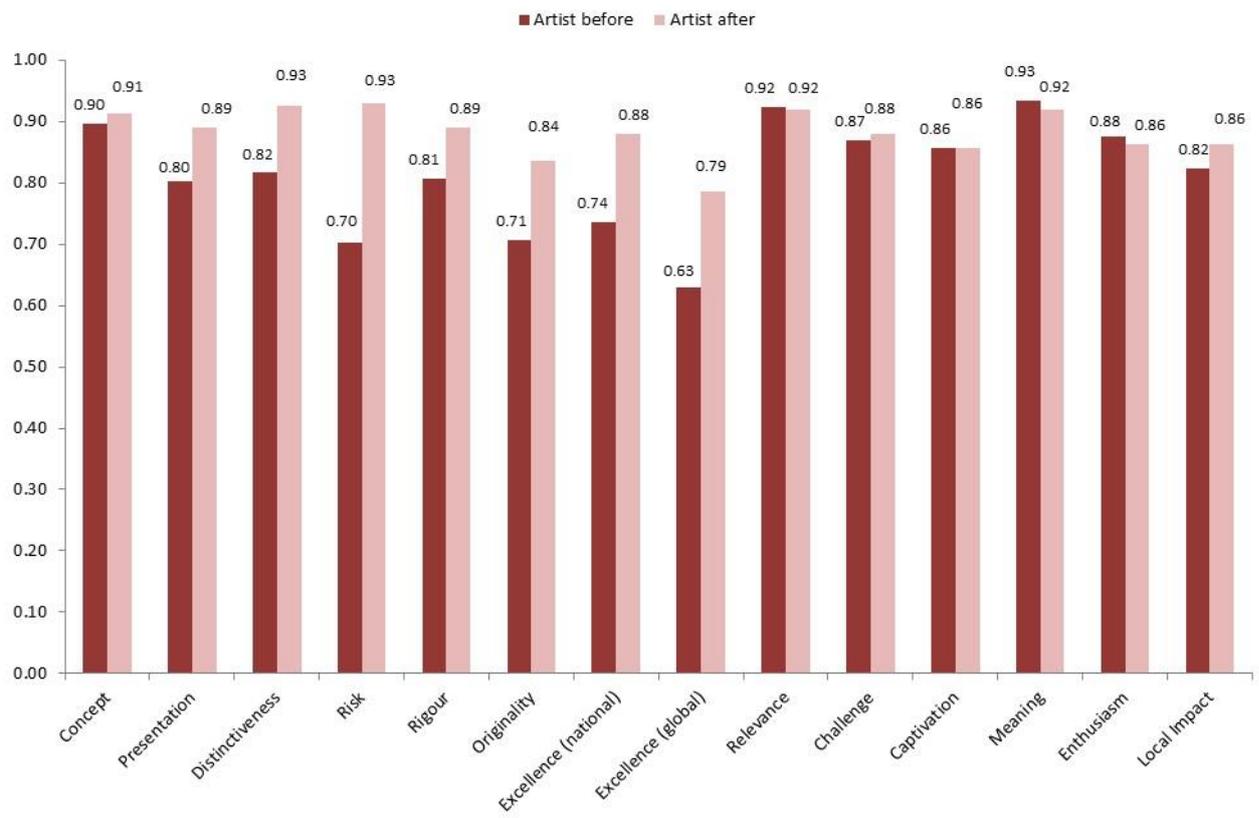
*n*=50

## Average 'before' and 'after' self scores for *Wonderstruck*



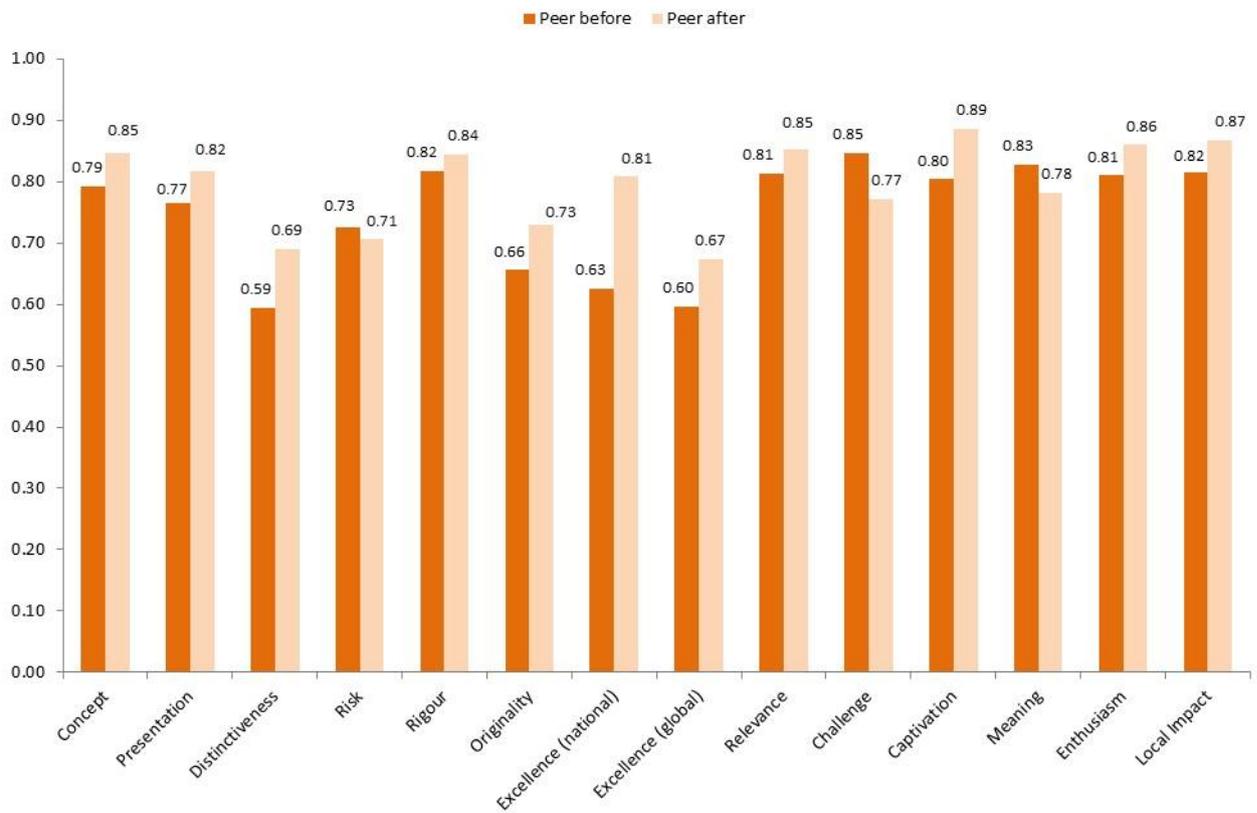
*Self before n=6*  
*Self after n=6*

## Average 'before' and 'after' artist scores for *Wonderstruck*



*Artist before n=3*  
*Artist after n=3*

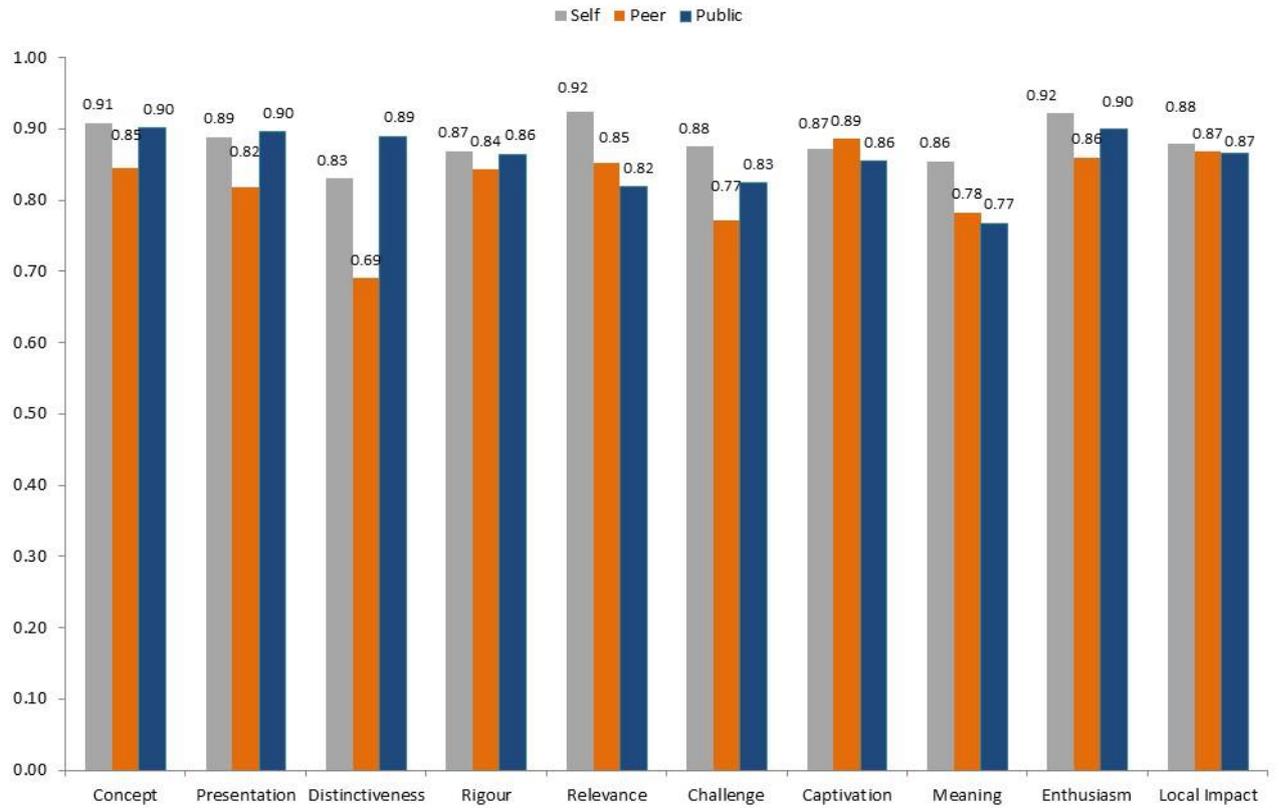
## Average 'before' and 'after' peer scores for *Wonderstruck*



Peer before n=5

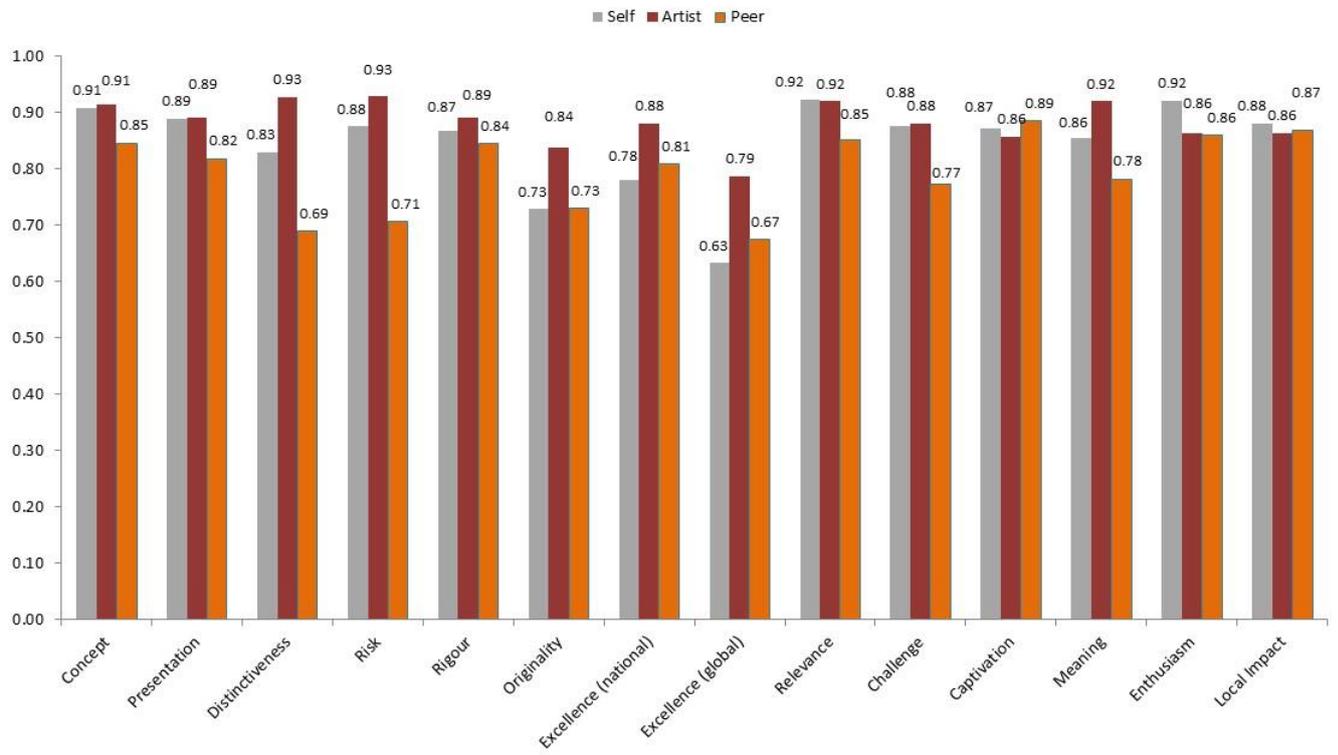
Peer after n=5

**Average self, peer and public scores for *Wonderstruck* (awarded after the event)**



*Self* n=6  
*Peer* n=5  
*Public* n=37

## Average self, artist and peer scores for *Wonderstruck* (awarded after the event)

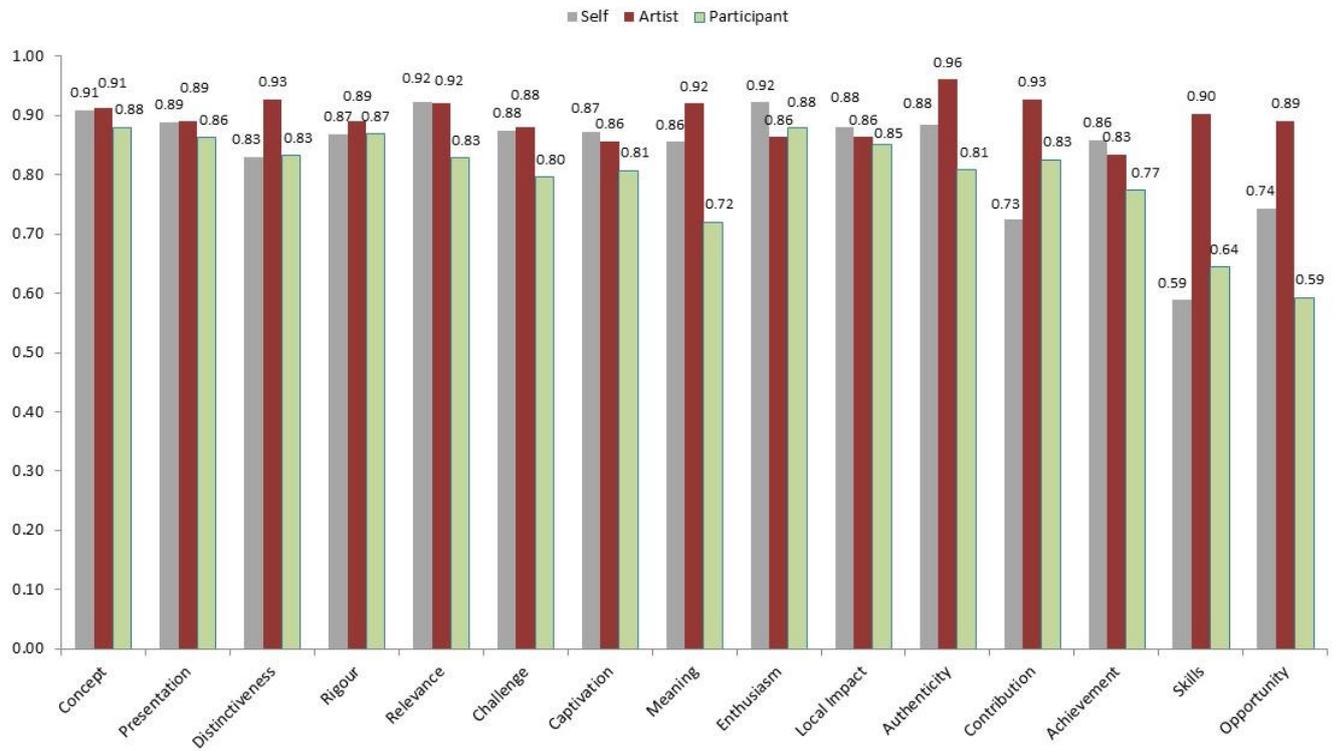


*Self* n=6

*Artist* n=3

*Peer* n=5

**Average self, artist and participant scores for *Wonderstruck* (awarded after the event)**



*Self* n=6

*Artist* n=3

*Participant* n=50



## **Responses to the question 'Will you do anything different as a result of this experience?'**

Of the 29 members of the public who responded to this question, nine (31 per cent) said that they would not do anything different as a result of their experience of *Wonderstruck*. Among the remaining 20 respondents the most common responses were to look out for more events like *Wonderstruck* in the future (mentioned by six respondents) and to visit Manchester Museum again or to go to museums more often (also mentioned by six respondents). Four respondents mentioned that they were planning to bring friends or family members to the museum:

'I will visit more museums, and drag my little brother along too'

Three respondents felt that *Wonderstruck* had given them a different experience of Manchester Museum, and that they would think about museums differently in the future:

'Different to see a museum noisy and full of happy people'

'Experience museums differently, as performance places that are alive with people's lived lives and differences'

'I will come again and take in more. It will give me a connection'

Of the 48 participants who answered this question, 13 (27 per cent) said that they were not planning to do anything different as a result of their experience of *Wonderstruck*. Among the remaining 35 respondents, 10 felt that they would further their involvement in singing in some way, by looking out for similar events or by deepening their commitment to their choirs. Two respondents had already joined a new choir as a result of *Wonderstruck*.

Four respondents noted that their renewed passion for singing was accompanied by a general increase in self-confidence. For example, one participant explained that she had joined She Choir as a result of being involved in *Wonderstruck* and that this was transforming her social life and feelings of confidence and enthusiasm:

'My overall confidence and social life has improved vastly...I have made loads of great new friends, have a fabulous social life, and really enjoy singing in rehearsals and in public performances with [She Choir]. I'll be much more enthusiastic and probably jump at the chance for similar opportunities in future! I'm so happy I did this!'

Another participant had a similar transformative experience:

'It was a fantastic experience. I had forgotten how much I enjoyed singing, and how important it was to me before I moved to Manchester. I've had quite a difficult time since moving here, and the project provided me with a pop-up singing community and a sense of belonging. It was quite a brave thing for me to do, and it really helped to boost

my self-confidence. I so enjoyed having the opportunity to take part in the *Wonderstruck* project, thank you.'

In addition to wanting to sing more, participants felt that their experience of *Wonderstruck* would encourage them to visit Manchester Museum more often; this was mentioned by eight respondents. Finally, two participants felt that they would think about the arts and artistic production in a different way as a result of *Wonderstruck*:

'I work in the arts, so taking part in this also reaffirmed what was important to me professionally and got me thinking about how I could incorporate some new things into the day job!'

Peers felt that *Wonderstruck* had helped them to think differently about the role and potential of museums, and how spaces and objects inside a museum are used:

'Think afresh of museum and gallery spaces as social spaces, suitable for new interpretations and interactions'

'It has given me food for thought about what works in terms of how museums work with their communities in a global context using collective response, music and performance'

Finally, self-assessors and artists were inspired to work more with music and song, either professionally or personally:

'I'll incorporate community choirs into my artwork as a great example of community/communal work, expression, spontaneity, friendliness, physicality and enthusiasm'

'I might join a choir – the value of singing (by taking part in a rehearsal) was eye-opening and a real pleasure'

## **Additional comments**

### **Summary of comments from participants**

Several participants took the opportunity to explain that *Wonderstruck* had been a new experience for them and to comment on how much they had enjoyed it:

'I had a fantastic time and am so glad that I showed interest and got involved in this project'

A couple of participants identified and appreciated the values underpinning the project:

'In a dour, reactionary world it's important that positive, human-centred, alternative (anarchic?) experiences are promoted and enabled. Thank you, People United'

There were some mixed views on the organisation of the event. Some participants felt that the whole experience had been very well thought through:

'The team who organised it were brilliant, from initial choir visits to the green rooms, from unlimited teas and coffees to individualised gifts at the end of the weekend.'

'Well-crafted and organised. Imaginative event involving several local choirs in unusual and unexpected locations'

However, for a couple of participants the event didn't quite 'hang together', and there were concerns that it might have been a difficult experience for audience members to follow:

'I felt that, in comparison to the singing parts, the spoken word elements of the show were not particularly high-quality and could have been done without. I'm also not sure that the show 'knew' whether it was an experience audience members should follow from start to finish or one for people to drop in and out of – this may have left an impression of being a little disorganised'

'I also wonder how well following the show around the museum worked for the audience. There were bottlenecks and I suspect parents of the children couldn't all get a great view'

Finally, there were a couple of requests to be given access to the words and music for all the songs included in the project as people were keen to know more about the songs they weren't involved in singing.

### **Verbatim comments from peers**

'Rich with meanings. Credit to the performers and producers/curators for instilling confidence in performers'

'I really enjoyed the whole experience, though one of my favourite bits was the diversity of the choirs involved. I loved the intergenerational aspects as well as hearing strong Mancunian accents coming through!'

'I thought it was a beautiful piece of work – entertaining, emotionally and intellectually engaging and with a strong sense of humour and fun. I was impressed with the process of engaging community response and how that was translated into music and then performance. The lyrics and spoken pieces managed to convey a strong and challenging global context and a sense of the potential of our human response – ideas which threaded through the work but in a subtle not overpowering way. There were some moments where logistics might have allowed a better connection with the spoken performances but that is understandable with only four performances and could have easily been ironed out over a longer 'run'.'

'My kids (nine and 11) liked it too. They commented on the mix of ages of people singing and the catchy tunes. Would love to hear them again! Also they felt it made the museum more interesting. They said they'd like a bit more help with stewarding and where to stand to get a view (it was wonderfully packed when we saw it).'

#### **Verbatim comments from self-assessors and artists**

'It's been a wonderful opportunity to work on such a joyful project, in-depth and with the artists and People United and all the many participants. I've used the word joy before, but it has been a joy to work on such an interesting project that chimes with my values and beliefs'

'Energy and positive feeling throughout the museum infectious – busy weekend. But people humming in queues, lots of laughter and a real desire for people to talk to each other about what they'd just seen/participated in/stumbled across...'

'It worked. On every level I can imagine. All the people involved in it and the audience agreed. It worked'

## **Definitions of quality dimensions**

### **Self, artist, peer, public and participant:**

Concept: it was an interesting idea

Presentation: it was well produced and presented

Distinctiveness: it was different from things I've experienced before

Rigour: it was well thought through and put together

Relevance: it had something to say about the world in which we live

Challenge: it was thought-provoking

Captivation: it was absorbing and held my attention

Meaning: it meant something to me personally

Enthusiasm: I would come to something like this again

Local impact: it is important that it's happening here

### **Self, artist and peer only:**

Risk: the artists/curators really challenged themselves with this work

Originality: it was ground-breaking

Excellence (national): it is amongst the best of its type in the UK

Excellence (global): it is amongst the best of its type in the world

### **Self, artist and participant only:**

Authenticity: it felt like a real artistic experience

Contribution: I felt like my contribution mattered

Achievement: I was amazed by what we achieved

Skills: I gained new skills

Opportunity: the project opened up new opportunities for me

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Charity registration number: 1036733

You can get this publication in Braille,  
in large print, on audio CD and in  
electronic formats. Please contact  
us if you need any of these formats.

ISBN: 978-0-7287-1559-2

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