

Celebrating Age



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THINKING
PRACTICE/

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Celebrating Age: big picture

- Arts Council / Baring Foundation motivations – Helen Featherstone
- Our Role



Celebrating Age evaluation

- Capturing learning from the activity supported in formats that allow other practitioners, policy makers, stakeholders and funders apply this learning and;
- Developing a simple peer support programme to enhance learning across the grant recipients for the first two years of activity.

Our approach

- Focused on learning and future activity;
- Flexible within a framework so can talk about evidence at programme level as well as individual projects;
- Drawing on experience of other programmes (e.g. Creative People & Places)
- Supportive rather than ‘inspection’
- Drawing on your own data collection
- Telling the story/stories that emerge

Key questions

- How and to what extent has the Celebrating Age programme met its **overarching aims**?
- What have been the main **barriers and enablers** to change across the grants recipients and partners?
- What **lessons** can be learnt for how best to develop approaches and activities with similar ambitions?

Other themes

- Partnerships and collaborations
 - e.g. Dementia Friendly Communities
 - Arts engagement work
- Involvement of older people
 - Triangulate data
 - Reflect programme intentions and wider co-creation/quality principles



National evaluation outputs

- Evaluation framework and tools
- Annual progress reports
- Evaluation reports: interim; final
- Suite of practical tools for:
 - arts & cultural sector;
 - health, housing & social care;
 - older people's groups;
 - commissioners, funders, policy makers

**WHAT WORKS,
WHAT DOESN'T,
AND WHY?**



What we need from projects

- Consistent monitoring data: the nuts and bolts
- Collecting, choosing and recording ‘Most Significant Change’ stories:
 - Changes in the quality of older people’s lives
 - Changes in the nature of their participation/ artistic development
 - Changes in organisational practice
 - Changes in partnerships
- Local evaluation reports, so we can synthesise, especially in relation to key questions and themes (above)
- Facilitating participation of older people in local/ national evaluation

Sharing the learning

Across the programme

- Peer learning network meetings (twice a year)
- Online hub: Celebrating Age closed group Facebook page
- Mentoring for 2nd phase projects (from Spring 2018)
- Most Significant Change



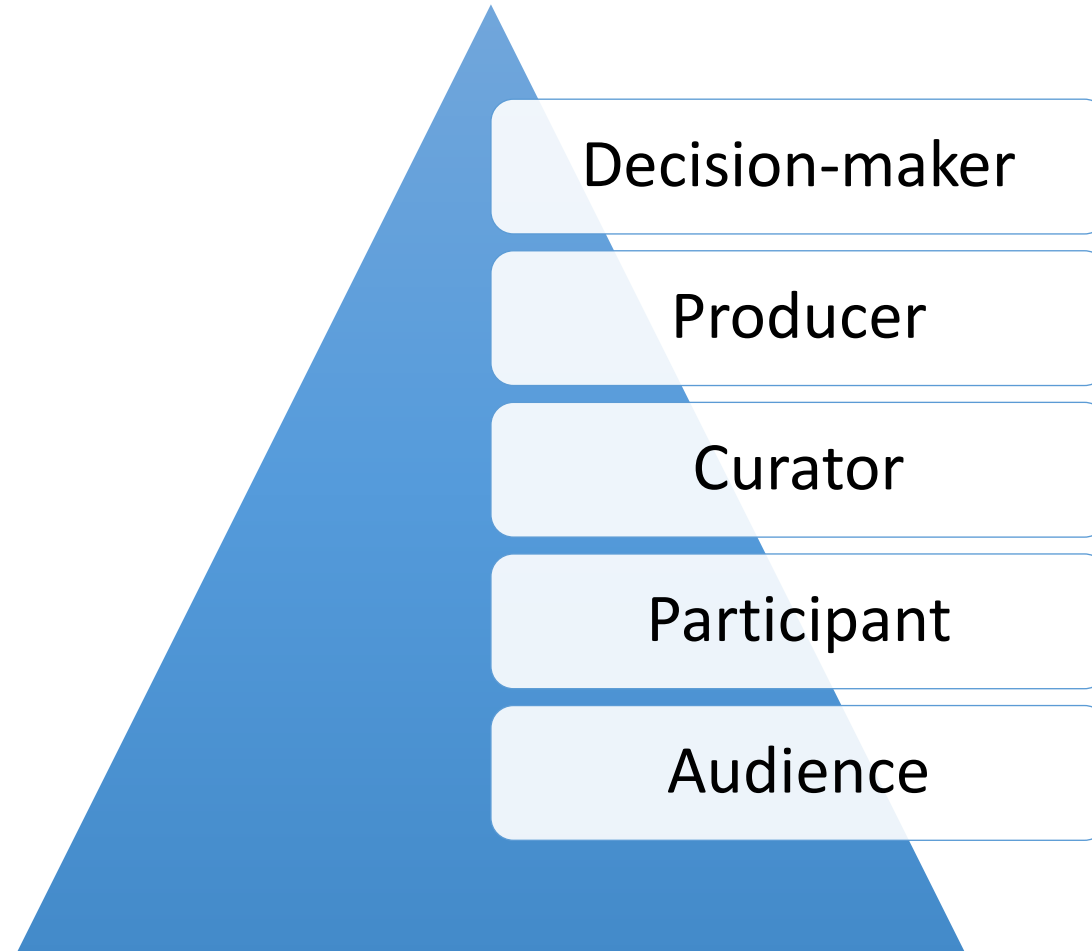
Across the sector

- Coordinating learning events/ maximising value of symposiums
- Public facing reports/ case studies for Culture Hive
- Distilling learning through network events and online hub

Finding out more about each others' projects

- Co-production/co-creation
- Age Friendly cities/places
- Improving health and well-being
- Legacy: Making the case
- Collecting evidence
- Challenging ageism/images of older people
- What's attracted you to this group, what do you want to learn, what can you offer?

Older people's involvement & influence



How do we ensure diverse older people's voices inform the evaluation?

- Telling their stories of change; collecting others'
 - Identifying the Most Significant change stories locally; nationally?
 - National older people's reference group: how might this work?
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- Any other ideas?
 - Any existing groups, leaders, assets in your project?



Most Significant Change (MSC): Background

- MSC was originally developed in 1996 by Rick Davies
- Used to monitor and evaluate a complex participatory rural development program in Bangladesh, across 700+ villages, involving diverse implementation and outcomes
- Further refined by Jess Dart in 2000

What's it used for?

- Evaluation during a programme's cycle, especially those that are:
 - focused on social change
 - with diverse outcomes that arise as the programme develops
 - where interventions (including evaluation) are expected to be highly participatory.

What's it about?

- MSC involves two main things:
 - collecting the stories about what's happening
 - making judgements about which of those stories carries the most weight / is most significant
- The stories can be about things like:
 - change in what people do over a period of time
 - change in how someone feels
 - change in working practice, or in projects

How are stories produced?

- By asking a question such as:

“Since you became involved in the project, in your opinion, what’s been the most significant change that’s taken place...

You can then ask either:

...in the project, or for you?”

- You would then ask the same question of everyone
- You might explain ‘the most significant change’ as ‘what stood out for you most’
- Stories might be short; they are written down

How are the judgements made?

- A group of other people (not those sharing their stories) – or one person – looks at all the stories collected in that cycle
- That group decides which one they feel is the most significant, for example by:
 - voting once
 - an iterative vote
 - giving points
- If there's no clear decision, then that's also recorded
- There's no right or wrong as to which is deemed the most significant – but the reasons why that story was chosen also need to be recorded.

Most Significant Change

1. Story gathering: I have learnt about the consideration of ethics and consent when working with older people, especially those with dementia.

This poses practical challenges for the programme evaluations we've been thinking through.

But it has changed how I approach thinking about this for other projects, and I will be more explicit in future about discussing the ways I would like to share what I hear, and more alert to representing participants' voices in what I write.

Most Significant Change

2. The call of the arts:

Reading your ACE applications, talking with some projects, and listening to Mark and Imogen's reflections on their initial chats with projects, has reminded me of my (rather long ago) professional theatre roots.

This means I am, in truth, tempted to volunteer with all your projects.

But it also means I am starting to think more proactively – and imaginatively – about how I might have more of an arts practice in my life, whether that's in paid or unpaid roles, or in terms of my own personal development.

Most significant Change

3. Getting excited about working with projects using a story-telling approach to evaluation – reading, thinking, talking with the team and projects about how it might work.

Then trying really hard to come up with a good story of change for this activity..... working backwards from the changes that I think would be significant and trying to retro-fit a story over them. Worrying that everyone else's stories of change would be bigger or more dramatic than mine.

Faced with a blank page/ slide, I went to bed the other night putting off writing my story (yet again). Woke up next morning chuckling at myself. I realised that I just need to trust the process, not overthink or over-plan: something would come to me on the day and I should be open to that.