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Questions of value and evaluation in current practice**

Mary Ann Hunter and Linda Page

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In a context of growing attention to the benefits of the arts in peacebuilding, this article reports on the findings of a small scoping study that aimed to identify how the arts are perceived and supported by international development agencies. Based on a 2012 analysis of five international aid agencies working in the South East Asia and Pacific region, the study found that arts and creative practices are not, as yet, afforded a significant role in current policy or strategy, although arts activity is recognised as a social development tool by agencies working in partnership with local organisations. Resulting from an analysis of participating agencies’ publicly available documentation, and interviews with staff, arts practitioners and volunteers working in field-based arts projects, this article argues that the value of arts-based interventions in peacebuilding and development is yet to be fully realised. Bringing field experience as well as policy and research backgrounds to the analysis, the authors consider why this might be the case and pose broader questions about the communication, role and influence of evaluation as one factor in this. They argue for a better acknowledgment of the diverse applications and implications of the “use” of the arts within complex social, political, and cultural systems by linking this call with evaluation methodologies that may better reveal the ways in which such projects “raise possibilities” rather than “confirm probabilities.” This article suggests a four-question schema for augmenting the documentation and evaluation of arts-based work to more authentically capture “the good” that may arise from the emergent nature of artmaking itself.

Introduction

In fields as diverse as education, health, public policy and community development, much has been claimed for the benefits of arts participation. As leading arts evaluation scholar, Matarasso (2003) points out,

the idea that art is, in some way or another, good for us ... is as old as art itself, and philosophers of conservative, liberal and inconsistent political views, from Plato, through Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche to the present day, have advanced equally varied interpretations of it. (p. 343)

It is therefore unsurprising that there is growing attention to “the good” of the arts as a tool for building peace. To date, documentation of the role of the arts in peacebuilding has included studies of traditional, contemporary, formal and informal creative practices. To give a sense of this diversity, there is recent research in peacebuilding and music (Bergh, 2011; Pruitt, 2011; Urbain, 2008), ritual (Schirch, 2004; Senehi, 2002; Walker, 2011), theatre (Cohen, Varea, & Walker, 2011), youth cultures (Hunter, 2005), and storytelling (Kyoon, 2009). The arts have been identified as a vehicle to represent, respond to, prevent and transform conflict, with positive impacts claimed beyond social peacebuilding (Ricigliano, 2003) where most art-based practices may be claimed to sit, into political and structural peacebuilding as well (Dunphy, 2012; Epskamp, 1999; Lederach, 2005; Liebmann, 1996; Shank & Schirch, 2008; Thompson, 2009; Thompson, Hughes, & Balfour, 2009; Zelizer, 2003). A number of studies extend beyond project documentation to investigate the ethical complexities, practitioner challenges, and unintended outcomes that arts activity in conflict and post-conflict settings can generate. Foremost among these is James Thompson’s *Performance Affects* (2009) in which Thompson charts his own experience as an arts-based fieldworker in Sri Lanka. Thompson’s interrogation of the value and ethics of arts interventions in places of war and conflict is particularly incisive, given that a group of community participants with whom he had worked became victims of a massacre in the months following his visit. In articulating a distinction between *effect* and *affect*, Thompson makes a persuasive case for the impact of the arts as immeasurable. Any authentic evaluation of its application in such settings can only, at best, be inconclusive.

Studies such as Thompson’s (2009) highlight the need for more critical investigation of the complexities that underlie a convergence of these two fields of practice – art-making and peacebuilding. Risks and unintended impacts do get acknowledged in individual project reports and in works of creative research and reflection such as *Performance Affects*. But, at

the same time, the variety of activities and approaches that are subsumed under umbrella definitions of “the arts” can lead to generalised assumptions and underacknowledgment of its potential and impact. A reliance on valourising the benefits of arts participation – “the good” of the arts – without further critical attention to its complexity in practice and the importance of its situatedness in social, political and cultural terms, could ultimately undermine its value.

This article aims to contribute to this growing exploration of the arts’ role in peacebuilding by conveying evidence of how arts-based activity is valued – and evaluated – in the domain of international development. What do the policies and strategies of the development agencies that are most likely to fund peacebuilding arts projects tell us about how the arts are valued? How do these findings relate to the perceptions and experiences of artists and volunteers in the field? In investigating these questions, we have identified a disjuncture between practice and policy: a gap in understanding about the nature of emergence in arts-based development work that we believe could be addressed through a reframing of how such work is evaluated. To address this, we arrive at a set of new framework evaluation questions that may augment (not replace) conventional logic-frame evaluation approaches to allow for context-sensitive and humanities-inflected processes of more appropriately assessing and communicating “the good” of the arts when it comes to building peace.

Methods

This article uses a small qualitative study of five government and non-government development agencies’ work in Australia and the South East Asia and Pacific region, as a locus for discussion.¹ The agencies include an international rights-based anti-poverty agency, an international Christian relief and advocacy organisation, an independent emergency relief and development organisation for children, a government overseas aid program, and an international partnerships development organisation. The initial study aimed to investigate the existence and extent of policies, strategies and priorities within these organisations for supporting arts-based and cultural activities generally, and in conflict-affected communities more specifically. The methods of study included: analysis of publicly available agency documentation for references to arts-based and cultural activity; correspondence with administrative and program staff of each of the five agencies; and semi-structured electronic interviews with five in-country practitioners currently or recently working in arts-based

¹ This research study received approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) network – Reference Number H12081.

projects in the region. The objective of these interviews was to deepen an understanding of the rationale and purpose behind organisational support for arts-based projects and to garner individual workers' perceptions of and attitudes to working with the arts in such contexts.

While certainly not generalizable, particularly given the study sample's distinctive regional and cultural focus, the findings of this small study reveal a valid foundation for raising further questions as to how arts-based peacebuilding is perceived and evaluated at an organisational level. This article elicits questions and a broader research agenda from this data, by contextualising the study's findings within current debates of evaluation in peacebuilding practice.

Definitions of Arts-based Peacebuilding

In this research, an inclusive definition of the arts is used. While informed by Cohen, Varea and Walker's (2011) expansive notion of arts and peacebuilding and Shank and Schirch's (2008) categorical use of the term strategic arts-based peacebuilding, this study adopts the phrase *arts-based peacebuilding* to denote artistic and creative practice that represents, responds to, seeks to transform or prevent the occurrence and negative impacts of conflict and violence.

This definition encompasses activities associated with conventional arts practices such as creative writing, dance, drama, media arts, music, or visual arts; as well as cultural activities such as oral storytelling, games, festivals, rituals, and traditional or environmental practices. Such activities may be conducted individually (as in the work of a solo visual artist, for example), or communally and collaboratively (as in a group music-making activity, for instance, or a film festival in which filmmakers, performers and audiences are involved). Such activities can be considered formal (in the context of community-accepted and recognised practices in designated arts spaces such museums or theatres) or informal (less circumscribed by traditional or established definitions of the disciplines of "the arts" and/or occurring in non-arts-specific settings). Our definition of arts-based peacebuilding, for the purposes of this research, rests on a distinguishing feature of arts-based work with communities that has an intentional element of representing, responding to, preventing or transforming conflict as a way to build "positive peace" (Woolman, 1985).

It is important to note that the majority of respondents in this study did not usually apply the term peacebuilding to their work, even though the intention of their work could be identified as such. Therefore in this research there is something of a part to whole relationship of peacebuilding to development. This relationship between the terms

peacebuilding and development is not intended to simplify the complexity of peacebuilding or development in diverse settings. Rather, this is to acknowledge that much of the arts-based peacebuilding activity that occurs, in the Australian and Asia Pacific region, in which we are working, does so within an international policy context of aid and development.

**Policy? What Policy? Instrumental versus Integrated Approaches
to Arts in Development**

In this study, it was unsurprising to find that arts and cultural activities did not feature significantly in the policies, strategies or current priorities of the sample aid agencies' work. It was clear that the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals were a key focus for these organisations' policymaking, reporting and evaluating. And while it was acknowledged by a number of participants in the study that arts activity did occur within projects that contributed to these goals, overarching statements about the role of arts or culture were mostly absent. This was confirmed in follow-up correspondence with individuals who worked in management and program positions in education, partnerships development, project development, communications, and research and evaluation within the participating organisations. When asked "What is your organisation's policy, strategy, and/or priority for supporting arts-based and cultural activities?", characteristic responses included "we have no direct policies [on arts and culture]", "arts and culture type projects are not what we would typically do", and "we don't fund those kinds of projects as a priority."

Documentation of significant arts-based projects did exist online and images of such work featured prominently in website communication and hard print materials, such as organisational reports and advocacy documents. The value of dynamic images of community and individuals engaged in and engaged by the arts is clear. But beyond these representational "good story" opportunities, it was evident that various kinds of arts activity were being supported, either financially or through organisational volunteer placements. One organisation was supporting a major multi-year, multi-location arts project that was developing the capacity of Australian Indigenous artists to develop their own social enterprise businesses in the production and sale of visual art. As a response to the negative and marginalising social and economic impacts of colonial conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Australia, this development project engaged with the arts in a way that aimed to build social and economic capacity through cultural expression. By providing professional development opportunities for Indigenous community members in arts business management, the organisation's intentional goal was to foster self-determination in a context

where political and social power had been eroded. This approach to integrating social, economic and cultural capacity-building goals within a business enterprise model appeared to be a context-sensitive response to the interdependent nature of social, cultural and artistic meaning-making in Australian Indigenous communities; for in Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, arts practices can be a direct expression of social relationships and of cultural ways of knowing and being. Artworks can convey important ancestral narratives, kinship relationships and community understandings of time, space and land. Their dissemination as artworks and as “ways of knowing”, it could be argued, contribute to significant peacebuilding. Similarly, another organisation’s volunteer project in Thailand was represented as achieving integrated social enterprise goals with marginalised communities of women via their traditional textile making practices. For the community of women involved, these practices held specific cultural meanings and value related to representations of ethnicity and gender.

The strong profile of these integrative practices of the arts did not seem to correlate to any similarly strong or distinctive organisational (or managerial) perception of the arts. For instance, one of the organisation’s respondents stated “there is probably arts and cultural content in our projects but it is used as a communication tool.” The variation between the generalised comments about the *instrumental* value of the arts (as a “tool” for communication or social enterprise) and more nuanced attention to *integrative* values (with respect to the ways in which the arts make meaning within social, cultural, political and aesthetic domains) is not uncommon. It reflects the core of policy debates that have characterised the field of socially-engaged arts practice internationally over the past 20 years: that is, a debate around how the value of the arts is assessed and communicated – questions to which this paper will return.

A publication launched by one of the participating organisations during the period of this study did signal a shift toward a more complex and nuanced valuing of the arts within the context of aid and development. Austraining International, one of three volunteer agencies delivering the Australian Volunteers for International Development program (AVID), published a focus issue of the quarterly magazine, *Connect*, titled “The Art of Development” (Austraining International, 2012). This focus issue profiles the work of ten volunteers engaged in arts-based assignments within the Austraining International program whereby, as field workers, their goal is described as “work[ing] with local people to reduce poverty by sharing knowledge, developing sustainable skills and building the capacity of individuals,

organisations and communities” (Austraining International 2012, p. 3). While the AVID program’s Manager of Research and Evaluation commented that “AVID has no sectorial expertise on arts or culture and no policy about it”, she indicated that AVID takes its lead from local partner NGOs as to their program priorities, “which sometimes involve arts, creativity and cultural development.” It is clear that Austraining International is not the initiator of such arts projects, but functions as a partnering organisation by contributing sectorial expertise through volunteers’ professional skills and knowledge. As the Manager of the volunteer program of AVID states in the *Connect* magazine, the aim is to profile “how Australian Volunteers are providing skills and expertise to assist other organisations as they collect, document, and channel the richness that makes up their peoples’ local cultural heritage” (McCulloch, 2012). Examples of projects in “The Art of Development” range from theatre performance to documentary film and traditional handicrafts, providing insight into a range of integrated (as distinct from instrumental) approaches to working with the arts as a means of supporting locally-driven change in complex societies. It was significant, therefore, to see this acknowledgement of the more complex value systems that intersect with the arts’ “use” in such settings (such as the meaning that specific artform practices or processes may have within cultural, political, social and regional domains) via the work of volunteer practitioners themselves.

Practitioners’ Insights

It was apparent in this study that while the sustainability of cultural practices and preservation of cultural heritage are acknowledged under many national and international goals for cultural development, the arts as an expression of culture did not appear significantly in the policies or strategies of the agencies studied. Yet, individual arts projects were being publicly profiled as “good practice” in development and in agency-community partnerships, albeit as good photo opportunities at times. The study revealed that on the ground field-workers conveyed a nuanced understanding of the value of the arts and cultural practice to their community-based work and, unsurprisingly, as artists and artworkers themselves these field practitioners were articulate about what they saw as the real and potential contribution of the arts to development goals, agency-community partnership, and peacebuilding more broadly. Yet, these study participants expressed the challenges of working within organisational and managerial contexts where there was limited awareness of the value of the arts beyond single-focus instrumentalism. One participant in the study, for example, claimed she felt the need to spend as much time advocating to stakeholders for the

importance of arts-based work, as much as actually practise it. This confirmed a sense that arts-based development and peacebuilding, despite being a growing field of practice and scholarly inquiry, was not yet well understood at an organisational and managerial level. It appeared that generalised organisational assumptions about “the good of the arts” sometimes side-tracked a need to raise awareness of its capacity and complexity. Here follows insights into some of those complexities from two Austraining International volunteer fieldworkers who were engaged in local arts-based projects in the Solomon Islands and Timor Leste.

William Head, a participant in this study, was an Australian volunteer who worked as the film and photography program curator of the 11th Pacific Arts Film Festival held on the Solomon Islands in 2012. Head described his motivation to pursue this work as the opportunity to

contribute in a meaningful way to the development of a nation. This was partially about the positive economic impacts of staging a major international event, but to my mind, ultimately about contributing to a shared national identity for an otherwise cultural[ly] disparate nation.

Head perceived the value of the Festival in many ways. It not only enabled various communities in the region to reclaim and profile a shared sense of identity through engagement with their traditional Pacific Islander cultures, but Head also observed that

there was much comment in the media and in general conversation [within the local community]... that [the festival] would be a test and proof of how far the Solomon Islands had progressed since the ethnic tensions during the last decade.

Evident in Head’s discussion was an awareness of the ways in which the arts festival had potential to build cultural and social capital in a post-conflict setting, as well as be a litmus test for achievements of political and structural peacebuilding as well. Could the city of Honiara manage to logistically stage the Festival? Could the nation assess something of its own peacebuilding achievements by measuring the city’s capacity to deliver on the organisational and material infrastructure needed for the festival to occur?

Head describes in his report for Austraining the range of positive outcomes for participants. He cites feedback from individuals who attended the films and associated photography exhibition and comments on the way that the festival had helped them reclaim community histories and cultural narratives. It is clear that participating artists in the festival valued the opportunity for public presentation of their work and, since the event Head has observed the development of locally-sustaining networks and professional development

opportunities for filmmakers. As a project supported by the AVID program (through Head's volunteer placement), the Pacific Arts Film Festival demonstrated the kinds of multi-layered impacts and implications that arts and cultural events can have as both a *process for*, and *measure of*, peacebuilding in communities. This could be seen as a characteristic of arts-based work that reaches far beyond instrumentalism.

For Holly Schäuble, another Austraining International volunteer and participant in this study, engagement with the arts as both a process and a measure of peacebuilding is similarly apparent. Working as co-director of Many Hands International, an organisation that supports artistic and creative expression in developing countries in the South East Asia region, Schäuble described the ways in which one of Many Hands International's 2012 projects with young people in the regional town of Lospalos in Timor Leste aimed to promote children's rights through "an intensive community social action theatre making project." The project's objective was to bring the Nafu Fila theatre company from a distant regional town of Ainaro to Lospalos with the intention to work with and engage young people in theatre making. Interestingly, the project also offered the emergence of other opportunities for intergenerational engagement. Six *lia nain* (elders) became involved and, as a result, sacred *ratu* stories of the community were shared amongst the elders for the first time, and further, collectively shared with the community in a public performance by the young project participants. As Schäuble observed, "There was an overwhelming sense of the significance of this for breaking down divisions between the various *ratu*, with whom people in Lospalos identify strongly and between whom there are long standing traditional rivalries" (Schäuble, 2012, p. 6). This project was an initiative in which art (in this case, interactive theatre) allowed for other kinds of new emergent opportunities for community development and relationship-building to take place. The aims of the project – to make and present theatre – were flexible yet robust enough to accommodate opportunities for further peacebuilding as they arose. As a result, the project then became more relevant to the actual needs and interests of that community. The project yielded important peacebuilding gains for the *lia nain*, their intergenerational connections, and for community cohesion more broadly. These were significant outcomes that were not intended as the end goal in themselves, but their significance and relevance to the community lay in the fact that they emerged through the "contextually ambidextrous" (Shank & Schirch, 2008, p. 233) act of artmaking itself. It was not just about the arts as a communication vehicle.

Schäuble's co-director of Many Hands International, Kim Dunphy, has written about

the range of positive impacts of this kind of participatory arts work in development contexts. These include the “maintenance of cultural heritage and identity, stimulation of creativity, health promotion, peace-building, trauma recovery, skill development, income generation and environmental awareness raising” (Dunphy, 2012, p.187). Drawing on a range of examples, Dunphy advocates for a multi-dimensional approach to valuing artwork in international development, employing Jon Hawkes’ (2001) concept of culture as the “fourth pillar of sustainability” as a theoretical base. In her reporting and associated research, Dunphy argues how change within such projects can be examined within paradigms that value “the dimensions of *social equity, cultural vitality, economic viability and environmental sustainability*” (Dunphy 2012, p. 187). Schäuble further reiterates the complex value of the arts in such settings, describing the connection between culture, poverty, conflict and peacebuilding:

Culture is not the first (or usually even the last) thing people think of when it comes to addressing poverty, but it has a vital role to play in achieving sustainable development. ... Where culture is weakened, interrupted or lost through conflict, colonisation, globalisation and/or poverty, we can see a corresponding loss of social cohesion and community wellbeing as people struggle to make sense of, and adapt to, a changing world. (Schäuble, 2012, p. 6)

Measuring Value and Change: The Challenge of Evaluation

These arts practitioners’ perceptions of the value of the arts in post-conflict settings convey nuanced appreciation and understandings of the multidimensional nature of the outputs, outcomes and impact of arts activities. Their projects and their individual perceptions about their work reveal how arts-based activity can operate beyond instrumental uses (such as direct communication) and beyond being a catalyst for economic enterprise. These practitioners draw attention instead to the diverse benefits and potential of such work within complex social (Loode, 2011), political, cultural and intergenerational systems of meaning and value. Head recognised that the “good of the arts” in the Pacific Arts Film Festival, for instance, was beyond just a celebratory showcase of culture and regional identity. The Festival’s impact could be valued at other levels: as an indicator of structural peacebuilding and civic achievement, *and* as the catalyst for sustainable networks in a growing local film industry. In Many Hands International’s Lospalos project, Schäuble and Dunphy brought focus to the change in the quality of intergenerational relationships, and the “newness” of offering a contemporary re-aestheticising of important community stories by

the younger generations involved. Local narratives became re-invested with contemporary meaning and value by a multi-generational community rebuilding their social fabric following violent conflict.

Yet, the question remains, why does policy and strategy not yet adequately “speak” to this potential and complexity? How might these practitioners’ understandings and insights into the value of arts practice in the field better influence the ways in which arts and cultural expression are communicated at an organisational level: with managers, donors and government agencies?

It can be suggested from this small regional study that further dialogue among local and international drivers, implementers and participants of development work is required to foster broader-based understandings of the complex value and practices of arts-based peacebuilding. While there is growing attention to this field of work in academic settings, our findings suggest that a practical avenue for such dialogue among practitioners and policymakers is evaluation. For in our own experiences as artswomen in community and international development settings, it is evident that evaluation reports – whether compiled by project implementers or independent evaluators – can often be the sole channel of communication about on-the-ground activity to organisational and external stakeholders. Yet, it is our contention that sole use of conventional evaluation processes, particularly those based on logic models (Leeuw, 2003), serve to exacerbate an instrumentalist rather than complex view of the arts. Such models do not suit the task of adequately capturing and communicating the diverse outputs, outcomes, impacts and diversity of arts-based experiences. Before suggesting ways in which a reframing of evaluation in arts-based projects might better address the practice/policy disjuncture, it is worthwhile considering the ways that conventional evaluation models are themselves based on presuppositions about the nature and value of change.

Conventional approaches to evaluation in international development (and in other environments), are driven by needs to monitor and assess a project’s process, effectiveness and impact. The starting point is often a project or program’s preconceived set of aims, goals and benchmarks against which its success has been deemed to be measured. Theories of change become evident in evaluation design: it is assumed that evidence of change will be available (or at least observable), and that such evidence can be collated and validated to measure the impact and success of the project’s achievement in meeting its intended goals. Such approaches are built on a positivist paradigm of knowledge construction that seeks

(mostly implicitly) to *confirm probabilities*: i.e. the intervention/project is implemented on the assumption that it will *probably* achieve the stated objectives; further implying that similar activity has *probably* been successful before and could be *probably* be replicated under similar conditions elsewhere. Therefore, evaluation often occurs within this implicit positivist discourse that seeks to aggregate information to enable informed judgement as to the probability of similar projects achieving similar results again and/or elsewhere. In many circumstances, this approach is entirely valid. For example, where the arts are explicitly “used” as a communication tool (for public health messages, for instance), or as an instrument for business enterprise, the activity may fit well within this kind of evaluation paradigm. Yet, given the complex ways in which the arts can also convey, contribute to, or unsettle a community’s systems of social, political and cultural meaning in more interactive ways (such as demonstrated by the Pacific Arts Film Festival and Many Hand International’s Lospalos project) these kinds of evaluation approaches limit appropriate assessment. In *some* arts-based interventions, intended and observable change may be sought from the outset, thereby suiting logic frame approaches to evaluating results (i.e. outputs, outcomes and impacts) against inputs and activities (Schalock & Bonham, 2003). But, as Lederach points out, the central paradox that unites the fields of peacebuilding and the arts is the desire to achieve outcomes that do not yet exist (Lederach, 2005). Predetermining the change that is most contextually relevant and needed in a multi-layered peacebuilding process is problematic. Strict goal orientation can limit the generative capacities of *building* in peacebuilding (and *making* in art). What to do, then, when seeking to more authentically evaluate and communicate on effectiveness or “success”? What frameworks are appropriate to gauge whether such activity is in fact “good” or ethical or appropriate within the political, social and cultural contexts in which it occurs?

Evaluation studies literature published recently in the Australia and Asia Pacific region is replete with critiques of and divergences from the “logic model” of evaluation, particularly when it comes to development and community-based work (Donnelly, 2010; Mertens, 2010; Nagao, 2006; Renger, Wood, Williamson, & Krapp, 2011; Tennant, 2010). Most studies uniformly argue that charting success and effectiveness on the achievement of preconceived goals is inadequate to the task of valuing and evaluating interventions in complex peacebuilding and community settings. There exists a range of more multi-layered contemporary systems-based approaches to evaluation that appear to better address complexity and influence in determining value and success (Boyd et al., 2007; Cabrera,

Colosi, & Lobdell, 2008; Henry & Mark, 2003; Renger et al., 2011; Tennant, 2010). These approaches and theories allow for greater acknowledgment of context, situation, diverse theories of change, and ongoing implications and outcomes of work. Furthermore, these studies speak of expansion and/or augmentation of logic models in an effort to empower and sustain local processes of evaluation involving community members more actively in evaluation methods themselves (Donnelly, 2010; Mertens, 2010). These research developments are relevant to how we may progress a more appropriate framework for the evaluation of arts-based peacebuilding.

In light of this, a notable feature of our interviews with field practitioners was their attention to “what happened next” when asked to assess or convey the impact of their work. This tendency to talk of the future – not necessarily in terms of extending the projects themselves, but identifying the work as a catalyst for a future (or kinds of future work) not previously envisioned – confirmed one of the core observations that, as artworkers ourselves, we have seen in our own and others’ arts-based experiences. That is, that quality arts-based peacebuilding (of the integrative type discussed above) is more about *raising possibility* than *confirming probability* (terms borrowed from arts educator, Gallagher (2000)). Making art, by its very definition, is a generative act: creating that which does not yet exist. Building peace, it could be equally argued, does the same. Our study participants’ self-directed attention and description of “what happened next” wasn’t always necessarily expected or predetermined, yet it held significance as a mark of impact and success.

How then can evaluation processes and reports – which seek to document, account for, and communicate the value of such activity – capture these possibility-raising characteristics?

We suggest an augmentation to conventional evaluation practices to more appropriately value and communicate the quality of emergence in such work. This is not solely about advocating for more new systems-based models of evaluation, but to add a further evaluative frame specifically for arts-based work. This is a frame that would capture the multidimensional nature of *making* art (which by its nature is emergent and generative) with an understanding of its situated influences (from and on political, cultural, social meaning-making) and generative impacts (such as what happens next). This means placing equal value on effects and impacts both within the original scope of the project’s aims and beyond. It means focusing more attention on how arts-based work engages with possibility; giving weight to outcomes that, in Lederach’s terms, may not yet exist (Lederach, 2005).

We suggest a framing devised with four key questions for processes of evidence-gathering and analysis: (i) *What was intended?* (ii) *What emerged?* (iii) *What insights were gained?* (iv) *What happened next?* Such questions may be posed by stakeholders, participants and/or independent third party evaluators during and after project implementation. They are also questions that, depending on the time and human resources available, may be asked separately within the domains of social, political, cultural and aesthetic systems of meaning. For instance, to ask these questions of the Pacific Arts Film Festival, with the social domain, such a framework may reveal (hypothetically) that (i) while there was some *intention* on the part of the organisers for social interaction among different cultural groups in the region; (ii) what *emerged* were disparate or individualised representations of Pacific Islands cultures in the films themselves. This may have provided (iii) further *insight* into the social dimensions of peacebuilding in the region; and (iv) *lead to* further incentives to support cross-cultural arts opportunities or *lead to* further public debate about nationhood. As a hypothetical example, we are not suggesting these are true of the 2012 Festival, but through this hypothesising we draw attention to how analysis of arts-based work in this way can provide more nuanced detail and communication of the complex value and situatedness of the arts activity itself.

It is important to note that these framework questions are raised here not as an alternative model for evaluation but as a gesture toward letting practice speak. It is an as yet untested schema that we hope may challenge prevailing assumptions about the arts only as instrumental (a “vehicle” or “communication tool”) to achieving other goals, caged solely in development or peacebuilding terms. The questions we envisage are intended to sharpen documentation and analysis of the actual art at the centre of arts-based peacebuilding, and acknowledge that the arts represent and contribute to complex processes of social, political, cultural and aesthetic meaning-making. The arts cannot exist solely as an instrument or method only. The framework could also be adapted to promote active implementer, stakeholder and participant involvement in evaluation, simply by having each ask and answer these questions of each other. Like any evaluation task, individual project scale and resources will determine the level of detail captured, the kind of methodologies employed, and the time available to gather data and analyse each of these questions. However, we believe this humanities-inflected framework, even in its minimal form, would invite more nuanced appreciation and understanding of the arts and their symbiotic relation to culture, society, politics, history, conflict and peace in any particular setting.

It is important to avoid evaluation measures and methods based on generalised assumptions that the arts are “good”. Rather, such a proposed schema may be used to both account for and assess an arts activity’s relevance and impact in the complex social, cultural and political systems of meaning and value in which it takes place. It is a schema that may problematize commonplace assumptions that an activity’s worth is best measured solely by its achievement of predetermined goals. However, part of the very value of working with arts at all in such development and peacebuilding settings is that it can often and boldly defy common assumptions at all.

Conclusion

This small scoping study has suggested that there is a gap between policy and practice when it comes to understanding and valuing the complexity and potential of the arts in international development and peacebuilding. While there is a perception that the arts are “good” and that they can function well in development contexts as a tool for communication and for social enterprise, we found that there are many other ways in which arts activities function as a practice and measure of peacebuilding. Field practitioners, working in partnership with local communities, bring a nuanced understanding of multi-layered outputs, outcomes and impacts of arts-based work, yet it is often only through evaluation reports that such meaning is communicated to those managing and funding such activity, in the international aid arena in our region at least. Given the importance of evaluation for making meaning of practice for wider audiences, attention must be given to more relevant approaches to communicating the value of arts-based peacebuilding through evaluation and reporting. We have suggested that a reframing is needed to allow for the equivalent valuing of intention and emergence – a schema that promotes evidence-gathering and analysis that clearly centres and links the arts practice to its situated contexts and values (in social, political, cultural, and aesthetic domains). Such a framing could augment conventional means of evaluation, while at the same time better value the complexity of the arts when applied in such settings.

What further questions, then, does a proposed reframing of the paradigms and methods of evaluation raise when it comes to arts-based peacebuilding? Firstly, given the complementarity of the arts and peacebuilding in terms of their generative capacities (the desire to achieve outcomes that do not yet exist), what can the fields of arts evaluation and peacebuilding evaluation learn from and with each other? While there are international communities of practice investigating similar concerns (Acting Together, 2011; Beausoleil, 2012; Blum, 2011), our particular interest is in how current research into systems thinking,

participatory practices, and interdisciplinary processes of evaluation could contribute to better understanding not only of evaluation but of the practices of arts-based peacebuilding themselves. Secondly, how could more iterative action-research evaluation paradigms in arts-based peacebuilding be encouraged in ways that avoid the high-cost resourcing usually required to implement? And, thirdly, how might arts-based methods of data collection and analysis – methods that more explicitly seek to capture *affect* than *effect* – be employed to make evaluation in arts-based peacebuilding more authentic and appropriate to the nature of the work itself?

The very term “creative practice” infers the generation of something new – whether that be a new experience, new future, new perspective or new artefact. We suggest that “the good” of engaging with the arts – whether as a participant, audience member, implementer, or stakeholder – is about generating new ways of knowing and new avenues for “what happens next”; regardless of whether “what happens next” is a preconceived intended outcome or is arrived upon in an emergent process of meaning-making. It appears from available documentation of diverse arts-based peacebuilding work, that one of the benefits of working with the arts is the capacity to enable conflict-affected communities to become alive to the idea of possibility. To return to the provocations of Thompson which began this paper, this is as much about *affect* as *effect*. As a field, we continue to struggle with the question of how this gets valued and measured. One step toward addressing this is to redirect attention to the qualities and characteristics of artmaking itself in all its diversity, situatedness, and emergence that is difficult to capture and measure by conventional means. By partnering with scholarly and practice communities in peacebuilding, the arts, and evaluation more broadly, we suggest that a re-framing of evaluation when it comes to arts-based peacebuilding could be possible: the implementation of new paradigms that will more appropriately value and communicate the generative capacities of both *making* and *building* that the very term “arts-based peacebuilding” implies.

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