



YOUTH VOICE EVALUATION TOOLKIT for LCEPs in the West Midlands

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Contents



What is Youth Voice?

Representation

- *'Youth Voice is the active, distinct, and concentrated ways young people represent themselves throughout society.'* Freechild

A human right

- Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) says that every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, **and to have their views considered and taken seriously.**

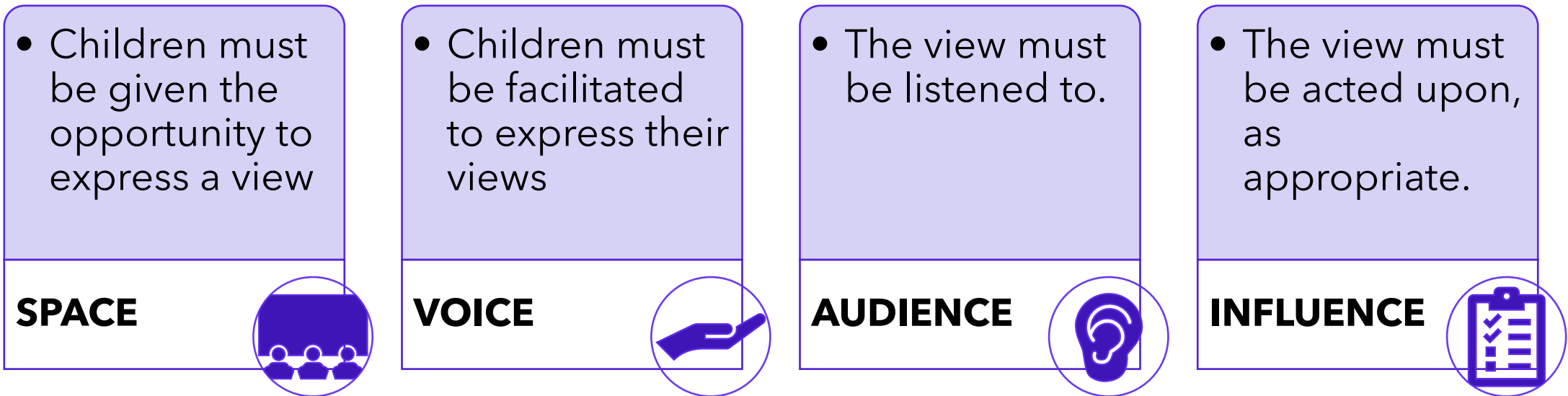
Varied

- Youth voice can be formal or informal and take many forms e.g.
 - consultation
 - co-creation
 - youth enterprise
 - youth leadership
 - youth governance
 - advocacy & campaigning

Compelling

- Young people's voices can be highly compelling where they
 - Are authentic and representative
 - Offer critical perspectives of what currently exists
 - Inspire empathy and share lived experience

Laura Lundy's Model of Child Participation



About this toolkit

- This toolkit provides a 'pick and mix' set of tools to support Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs), and others, to reflect upon and evaluate youth voice activity
- It has been commissioned by Arts Connect on behalf of LCEPs in the West Midlands with a steering group of Cannock Chase CEP, Shout Out for the Arts (Warwickshire CEP) and CEP Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire. With thanks to Earthen Lamp who have tested and fed back on tools as evaluators to Shout Out for the Arts.

Using the toolkit



These tools will help you gather evidence with which to evaluate youth voice activity. Please choose and use any that feel relevant, helpful and practical for you. Don't feel the need to use them all.



Tools are a starting point - please feel free to adapt and change using your preferred approach or platforms. Be creative but stick to The Principles.



Evaluation only happens if you think about and discuss what you find. Put regular review meetings in place with important stakeholders. Share data and feedback. Discuss what it means.



Where possible, record responses or data in an anonymised form that you can return to in future, whether for reporting or future funding bids.

The Principles



Young should be involved in evaluation

How can young people

Identify measures of success?

Identify or gather evidence?

Discuss and interpret evidence?



Not all young people are the same

We should set out to understand the value of a range of youth voice approaches from multiple perspectives.



Anonymity, choice & safeguarding

Evaluation should ensure that those involved in your activity can speak freely without fear of what others will think. Contributing to evaluation is a choice and should be encouraged but not required.



What's in it for young people?

Young people's ideas and time should be respected and we should make sure they feel the benefit of youth voice activity *and evaluation*.

The tools

01

Recording key info

- Collecting registration/ monitoring data
- Activity Tracker

02

At the outset

- Asking 'what would success look like for young people'?
- Evaluation questions
- Confidence & knowledge self-assessment (before)

03

During your activity

- Mid-point focus group
- Peer observation

04

Final stages

- Feedback surveys
- End-point focus group
- Confidence self-assessment (after)
- Knowledge self-assessment (after)

05

Professional learning

- Partner debrief
- Bringing it back to the LCEP

01 Recording key info

Capturing and sharing information; monitoring participation

Registration & monitoring data

Are the young people taking part representative of their wider community?

Recommended data collection

- Postcode (for geographic & UK Index of Deprivation mapping)
- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Disability and additional needs
- Prior experience or interests

Other options

- Education/employment/NEET status (over 16s)
- Experience/connections to LCEP partners
- Challenging circumstances (barriers to access)
- How did you hear about this activity?
- What made you want to sign up?
- Who leaves / who stays?

Some example registration Qs

Are you currently

- At school, college or university?
- A trainee or apprentice?
- Working or volunteering for 20 hours+ per week?
- Not in employment, education or training

Have you experienced any of the following potential challenges or barriers?

- A disability or long-term illness
- Mental health challenges e.g. anxiety, depression
- A learning difficulty
- Homelessness
- Being a refugee or asylum seeker
- Being looked after or in care
- Being a young carer or young parent
- Social challenges e.g. loneliness, autism, difficulty making friends
- Struggling for money
- Another personal challenge

Why did you choose to sign up?

- Looking for something to do
- I like to be creative
- Hoping to learn something
- To gain skills and experience
- To meet new people
- I want to make a difference
- I think young people's opinions should be listened to

How would you describe yourself?

- Creative at home (e.g. drawing, writing, playing, making things)
- Creative online (e.g. TikTok, Instagram)
- Creative in with others (e.g. in a club, class, group)
- A consumer (of books, recordings, performances, exhibitions, online arts content)
- I don't do any these things much, at the moment

Activity tracker

Please see Excel workbook supplied separately and duplicated on next slide

Record keeping

- Captures key info for youth voice activity that takes place over time and/or across a range of partners

Metrics and key data

- Allows informed, overarching statements about what has happened, why and who took part

Reflection

- Designed to stimulate conversations within partnerships about the purpose and nature of youth voice activity, and how this might evolve over time

Youth voice activity tracker (Excel version available)

LCEP Name

Activity Name

Partners involved

About the young people you have worked with

Who has been involved in this activity?

Please count all young people, even if they did not complete

Total No. Participants

Age 8 - 11

Age 11 - 14

Age 14 - 16

Age 16-18

Age 18-25

Age not known

How many young people

Joined at the start?

Were there to the end?

Stayed the whole course?

What were the eligibility criteria for young people?

How were young people recruited?

About your youth voice activity

What types of youth voice activity to young people take part in?

Please indicate number of participants for category and number of sessions of activity

Youth Consultation

Young Producers

Youth Governance

Peer Leadership

Youth Enterprise

Youth Advocacy

	Participants	Sessions
Youth Consultation		
Young Producers		
Youth Governance		
Peer Leadership		
Youth Enterprise		
Youth Advocacy		

What roles have young people taken as part of this youth voice activity?

Please indicate number of participants by form of engagement

Co-Leadership

Collaboration

Consultation

Engagement

Training

	Participants	Sessions
Co-Leadership		
Collaboration		
Consultation		
Engagement		
Training		

What is the purpose of this activity for your organisation/partnership?

Organisational development

Improving quality of offer

Creative value

Sector development

	Yes/no	Notes
Organisational development		
Improving quality of offer		
Creative value		
Sector development		

Diversity monitoring

Please add number of participants from each of the following groups

Female

Male

Trans/Non-binary

Gender not known

Disabled

Not disabled

Disability not known

White British

Other ethnic origin

Ethnicity not known

% of young people living in neighbourhoods ranked in Deciles 1 - 3 by the UK Index of Deprivation

	% of known
Female	
Male	
Trans/Non-binary	
Gender not known	
Disabled	
Not disabled	
Disability not known	
White British	
Other ethnic origin	
Ethnicity not known	
% of young people living in neighbourhoods ranked in Deciles 1 - 3 by the UK Index of Deprivation	

Purpose & intent

Getting clear why you want to foster youth voice in your LCEP - and how you intend to do so - can help you to

- Communicate what you are doing and why
- Identify evaluation / feedback questions
- Assess the range of activities you offer

You can record this in the Activity Tracker along with the type of youth voice activity and the roles of young people

Why youth voice?



Organisational development

- Inspiring different ways of thinking & working
- Learning how to better engage young people
- Securing stronger relationships with young people

To improve the quality of experience offered to young people

- To be responsive to young people's priorities, ideas and needs
- To develop young leaders and producers

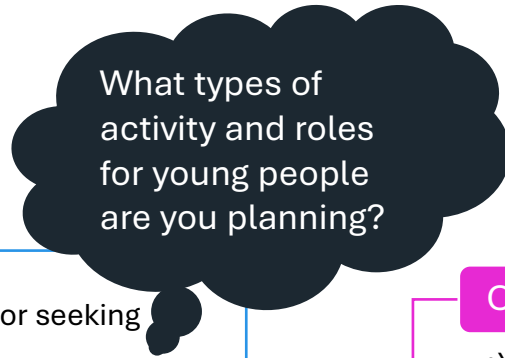
For its creative value

- Authenticity in showcasing young people's creativity
- To change society's perceptions of young people
- Because audiences are interested in what young people have to say

Sector development

- To influence a wider group of partners
- To secure support for more youth voice and youth-led activity
- To increase representation of young people in decision making

Types of youth voice activity



Roles for young people

Consultation

- 'Asking open questions, listening to the responses, clarifying or seeking further insight, and then acting on what has been said'

Co-Production

- Projects or events produced by and for young people; sharing decision-making with young people in a creative setting

Enterprise & Start ups

- Supporting and developing young, aspiring entrepreneurs to have ideas and pilot new concepts

Leadership

- Young people taking responsibility and inspiring others e.g. as facilitators, mentors or teachers

Governance

- Engaging young people in strategic operations and higher level decision-making in an organisation

Advocacy & Campaigning

- Young people speaking out about causes that matter to them

Co-Leadership

- Young people make decisions and have opportunities to lead. They can say clearly what they, personally, are responsible for.

Collaboration

- Young people contribute ideas, influence decisions and are involved in implementing them. They see their own involvement reflected in outcomes.

Consultation

- Young people are listened to and may influence decisions, They are not involved in enacting next steps.

Engagement

- Young people interact with others to gain insight and understanding. They express ideas but their influence is limited.

Training

- Structured activity that supports young people to gain new skills or understanding

02 Evaluation from the outset

Understanding what success might look like; establishing a baseline

Evaluation Questions

What key questions will allow you as a partnership to understand the effectiveness of your activity?

Make a list to help you plan how to use the evaluation tools that follow.

Identifying questions

- How would young people measure success? See p16
- What is the purpose of youth voice for you / your partnership? See p 13
- Why have you chosen this type of activity? See p14
- How will you know if young people are supported, heard and responded to? (see p3)
- What tools or questions in this toolkit feel relevant?

Measures of success

- Quality of experience for those involved
- Outputs – things that are delivered or produced
- Outcomes – results which might include achievements, learning, new funding,
- Impacts – such as influencing longer term plans

Send me a postcard

- Write a postcard naming **3 things you want to achieve** through this experience.
- Put your name on the back.
Discuss at the end of the project

Discussion or graffiti wall:

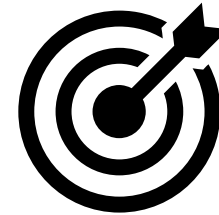
Why do you want to take part?

- What appeals to you?
- What do you hope to gain?
- What do you hope the experience will be like?

Asking young people: “What would success look like for you?”

Write a positive review:
Imagine you are at the end of this project and its gone really well

How would you describe what you liked about it to a friend?



Bullseye!

- Agree 3-5 group goals
- Make a target of concentric circles
- Add a goal to each ring, making them more difficult as you reach the centre

Voting wall (3 votes each!):

What do you most want from this experience?

- To feel welcome & included
- To feel respected and listened to
- To feel it's OK to be me
- To learn new skills
- To grow in confidence
- To achieve something I am proud of
- Something else (pls write)

Before & after confidence self- assessment

- Ask young people these questions before & after your activity to measure changes in confidence
 - A hard copy questionnaire will work but a printed postcard (posted in a box) or online quiz (completed on phones) can feel more personal and private
- Provide a 5-point scale or answer choices for each ability
 - Answer choices: Strongly agree, somewhat agree, not sure, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree.
 - Attribute a score on a scale where strongly agree = 5 and strongly disagree = 1
 - Analyse by asking:
 - Which skills areas have seen the most improvement?
 - Is this similar for all participants?

Anything
else to add?

I am confident in my ability to:

1. **Manage my time** e.g. arriving on time, completing tasks on time
2. **Work well in a team** with others
3. **Communicate** my ideas to others
4. **Face a new challenge**
5. **Solve problems**
6. **Make decisions**
7. **Evaluate** what is good about something and what could be better


Comment box

Before: What skills would you like to develop by being part of [this activity]?

After: What is the most valuable skill you will take away from [this activity]?

Before & after knowledge self- assessment

- Ask young people these questions before & after your activity to measure changes in knowledge
 - A hard copy questionnaire will work but a printed postcard (posted in a box) or online quiz (completed on phones) can feel more personal and private
- Provide a 5-point scale or answer choices for each ability
 - Answer choices: Strongly agree, somewhat agree, not sure, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree.
 - Attribute a score on a scale where strongly agree = 5 and strongly disagree = 1
 - Analyse by asking:
 - Which skills areas have seen the most improvement?
 - Is this similar for all participants?



Anything
else to add?

I have a good understanding of:

1. What is meant by the terms 'creativity', 'arts' and 'culture'
2. The range of creative, arts and cultural opportunities available in my area
3. The types of creative jobs and roles that exist for artists, performers and people who organise arts and cultural opportunities
4. The types of creative jobs or roles that I might be good at

Comment box

Before: What would you like to find out more about by being part of [this activity]?

After: What is the most useful thing you have learnt as part of [this activity]?

03 Evaluation during longer projects

Capturing learning, checking in and making adjustments

Sample mid-point feedback questions

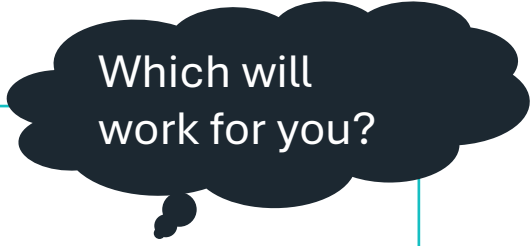
Inspired by Laura Lundy's Model of Child Participation (page 3)

SPACE	VOICE	AUDIENCE	INFLUENCE
I feel safe and there are clear boundaries and expectations	I have been supported to have my voice heard	I have been listened to from the start	I have been told what has happened as a result of my views or ideas
I am treated with respect and as an equal	I have received clear and helpful information at the point that it has been needed	I know how my ideas or views will be used and who by	I feel that my opinions have been responded to where possible
I feel comfortable giving my opinions	There are a good range of different ways I can contribute	I feel I am taken seriously	I feel that I/we have been able to have a positive influence
I have understood what is happening	There are opportunities for me to develop my ideas	People have been honest about what is possible and why	I am pleased with what we have achieved
I have had enough time to talk or contribute			

Answer choices: Strongly agree, somewhat agree, not sure, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree.

Holding a mid-point focus group

- Semi-structured 15-20 min group interview(s) of 1 – 5 participants.
- Check in with what's working well and what could be improved
- Troubleshoot any problems while there's time to do so



Which will work for you?

Option A: Do-It-Yourself

- + Easy to organise
- Participants may speak less freely if they are concerned about what you think of their answers

Option B: Young-person led

- + Skills up young people
- Young participants may be concerned about what a young leader thinks about their answers

Option C: Led by a neutral facilitator (e.g. partner org)

- + Young people are more likely to speak freely
- + A chance for a peer from a partner organisation to learn more about your activity
- Requires organisation (including appropriate safeguarding measures)

Focus Group ‘How to’

Introduction

- Explain the purpose of the focus group and how answers will be used
- Invite young people to be honest. Acknowledge that they will have different experiences and all views are valid
- Let participants know how they can communicate with you privately if there is anything they do not wish to say in the group.

Asking questions

- Choose 5 – 7 questions you will ask everyone and some optional prompts to follow up and explore in more detail
- Ask open questions and avoid leading participants towards answers.
- Ask for clarification if needed e.g. ‘what do you mean by...’, ‘do you mean this... or is it more like this...’
- For each question, invite a different participant to respond first. Then ask if others feel the same or differently.

Keeping a record – some options

- Ask permission to make an audio recording. Bare in mind that listening back is time consuming.
- Make your own notes. Read back a summary to check you have understood correctly.
- Stand around a large sheet of paper or at a whiteboard/flipchart/graffiti wall. Make notes e.g. a spider diagram or mind map that participants can see and add to.

Sample focus group questions

Choose one or two questions from each section

Easy openers

- What have you been doing as part of this activity? (Note how YP describe their role)
- Why did you choose to take part?
 - Where did you hear?
 - Do you know anyone else involved?
- Have you done anything like this before?
- Have you been to [this place] before?
 - When and with whom?

Find out what's important to young people

- What have been the best things about being involved?
- Has there been anything that has not been working well for you?
 - How could things be improved?
- What would you like to do with the time that's left?
- Would you recommend taking part to others your age? If so, why?

Understanding engagement

- What have you individually been working on or hoping to achieve?
- How would you describe your own role?
 - How have your ideas been used?
 - Can you see outcomes that you feel you have contributed to?
 - Is there anything you are particularly proud of?
- Have you had access to the support you need?
 - What support has been the most helpful?

Quality of experience

- How would you describe this experience to others in three words?
- Do you feel you have been respected and listened to? Why?
- Has everyone had the chance to make their own, individual contribution?
- Do you feel you have had a choice about what you do and how involved you are?
- Do you know how your ideas or work will be used in future?

Benefits to young people

- Have you learned anything new from this experience? If so what?
- What are you now more confident to do?
- Can you give an example of how you have used skills or confidence elsewhere?
- Is there anything else you will take away?

Tracking influence & impact



- Identify how young people have influenced the thinking or practice of organisations and professionals
- Embed a feedback loop into the experience for young people: ‘You said, we did’

Duty Bearer's Audit

Could this be adapted for e.g. co-production or youth leadership activity?

Laura Lundy of Queen's University Belfast argues that there “[should be a presumption of acting in response to a child's views](#)” including “[a formal response to tell them what influence they have had](#)”.

She proposes an audit (a follow up interview, form or survey perhaps) of those who ask for young people's views to understand how they have fulfilled their duty to act in response to them.

[Lundy presents her Duty Bearer's Audit](#)

What did you agree with?

What, if anything, surprised you and why?

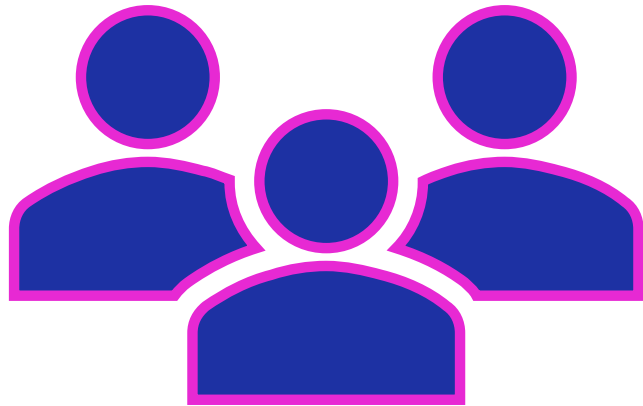
Did you disagree with anything, if so, what and why?

Has it influenced your views in any way and if so, how?

What have you decided?

What is happening next and when will it happen?

Peer Observation



- Invite a peer from another organisation or LCEP to observe your activity and give structured feedback.
- Two-way observation – in which peers observe each other’s work – is ideal
- Debate issues and identify shared learning
- Peer-to-peer feedback is non-hierarchical. It is a two-way exchange of views which are not right or wrong (but might be interesting)
- Consider co-design of shared solutions you can trial and test in different contexts

Tips for peer observation

Planning

- Choose a peer with relevant experience and make sure they understand what your activity is trying to achieve
- Invite observation once your activity is up and running and a group dynamic is established
- Agree how an observer will be involved in the session – watching, joining in, being introduced? What will be least disconcerting for young people?
- Agree a focus for the observation by asking 2 or 3 specific questions.
- Agree how feedback should be given – in person, in an email, on the phone.
- Make sure appropriate safeguarding protocols are in place and that young people are comfortable with the observer's presence

At the observation

- Observers may join in and speak to young people if agreed in advance but should avoid contributing in a way that may change the nature of the session
- Make notes during or after the session under agreed focus areas or questions
- Take time to observe how different young people respond or participate
- Consider how different activities contribute to the overall experience.
- Identify approaches or ideas you like from the session for your own record, and to give feedback

After the observation

- Arrange to meet or speak where possible
 - The observed practitioner should describe the session, what their thinking was and how it went
 - Observers should give feedback on request in response to specific agreed questions
 - Observers should start with what you liked about the approach taken and also describe what they saw happening
 - If asked to suggest improvements use sentence starters like 'have you considered...?' or 'if it were me I might...'
 - Finish by discussing what you will both take away from the experience

04 End point evaluation

Reflecting on the experience and identifying outcomes

- To follow (including feedback survey questions)

Final stages checklist



Re-run mid-point feedback questions and see if anything has changed? [See p 21](#)



Gather end point feedback [See p 30](#)



Re-run Confidence and/or Knowledge Audit and assess 'distance travelled'? [See p 18 & 19](#)



Consider a final focus group with participants to share and interpret findings? [See p 23 & 24](#)



Ask partners to complete a 'duty bearer's audit' if you haven't done so already [See p 26](#)



Organise an evaluation debrief with professionals, partners (and young people?) [See p 33 & 34](#)

Sample end-point feedback questions

Please also see mid-point survey Qs (p 21) which can also be used at the end of projects

Quality: Experience

- I had a good time
- I feel proud of what I/we have achieved
- I have been respected and listened to
- It felt like a good use of my time
- I would recommend this experience to others

Quality: Organisation & access

- Things were well organised
- I had the information I needed
- I was able to take part in ways that worked for me
- I had the support I needed
- Everyone was valued and included

Outcomes

- I have learnt something interesting
- I have developed useful skills
- I have gained confidence
- I have formed relationships of value
- This experience has helped me see myself differently

Looking Ahead

- I am taking away new ideas or goals
- I would like to do something like this again
- I now feel more interest in....
- I am now more likely to....

Answer choices: Strongly agree, somewhat agree, not sure, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree.

05 Professional learning

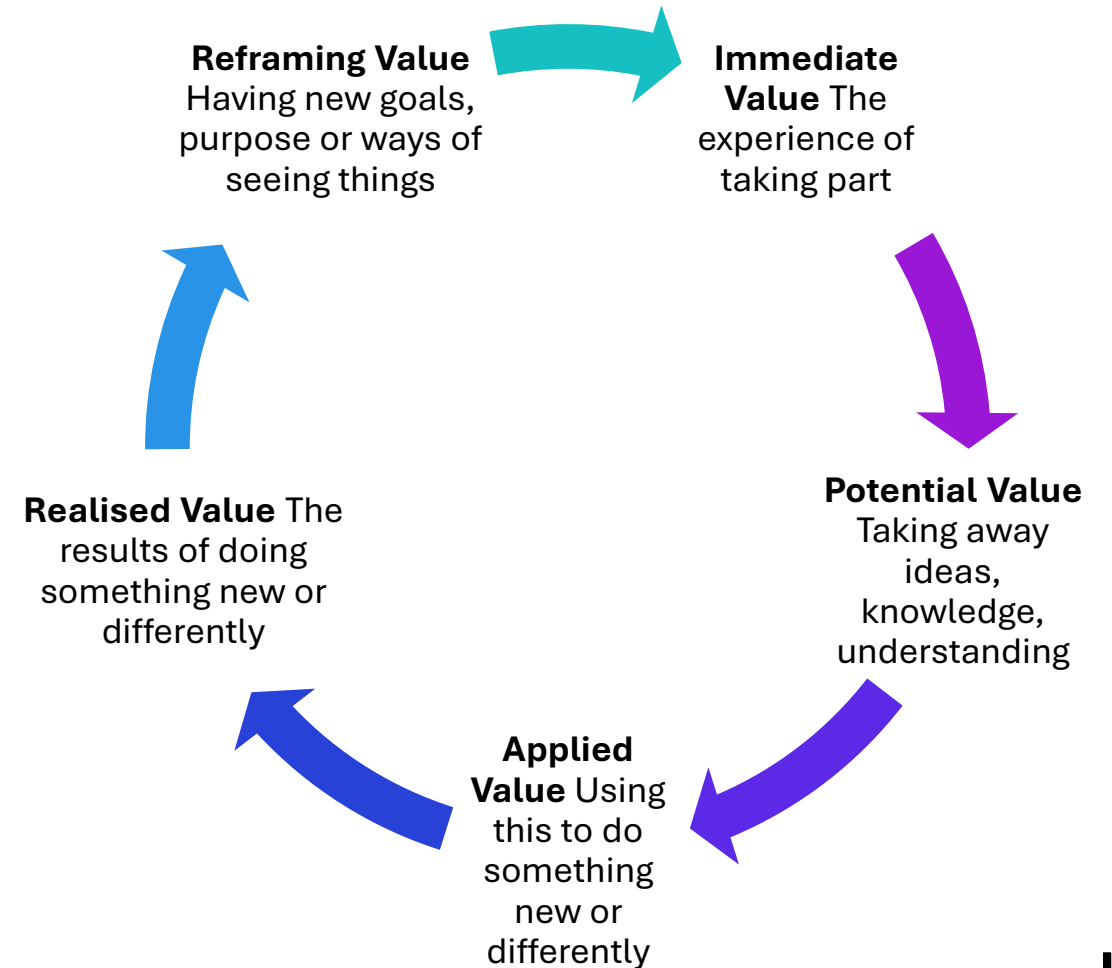
Identifying what can be learned and how this learning can be applied

- To following including suggested content for project debriefs and presentations to partners

Professional Learning value

Professional learning happens all the time – through planning, doing and reflecting upon our work as well as through training or skills sharing.

The value of professional learning can be seen as a cycle or ripple effect – measured through its potential or real impact on the wider work of a practitioner or organisation.



Sample professional learning evaluation questions



What was it like to be involved in this project?

- IMMEDIATE VALUE: Note impacts on e.g. motivation, professional isolation, opportunities to observe or reflect for example



What will you take away from this project that might influence your work in future?

- POTENTIAL VALUE: Note new ideas, contacts, knowledge, understanding for example



Have you done anything different in your wider work as a result of this project, or how might you do so?

- APPLIED VALUE: Note ideas for more, new or different approaches



If you have done anything new or different already, what have been the results of this change?

- REALISED VALUE: Note impacts on reach, inclusion, effectiveness or outcomes for example



Has this experience changed the way you think about your own role, goals or priorities?

- REFRAMING VALUE: Note shifts in perspective

Further information



Useful links

[The Youth Voice & Participation Handbook for creative & cultural organisations, Lawrence Becko & Jennifer Raven](#)

[Youth Voice Toolkit, Freechild Institute for Youth Engagement](#)

[Enabling the meaningful participation of children and young people globally: The Lundy Model](#)

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About the author

Andrea is a research, strategy and evaluation consultant to the UK creative, cultural and heritage sectors. She specialises in supporting the professional learning of organisations, partnerships and policy makers with a focus on better engaging under represented communities

