

# **IMPACT & INSIGHT TOOLKIT:**

## **DIMENSIONS –**

## **THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT**

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## INTRODUCTION

This report details how Counting What Counts (CWC), working with the cultural sector in the UK and globally, has been actively collaborating to improve the way in which cultural organisations can better measure the difference their work makes.

We felt that ten years into this collective endeavour with the cultural sector was a good moment to pull together the story of how a wide-ranging set of outcome measures ('dimensions' in an Impact & Insight Toolkit<sup>1</sup> sense) have been developed over time.

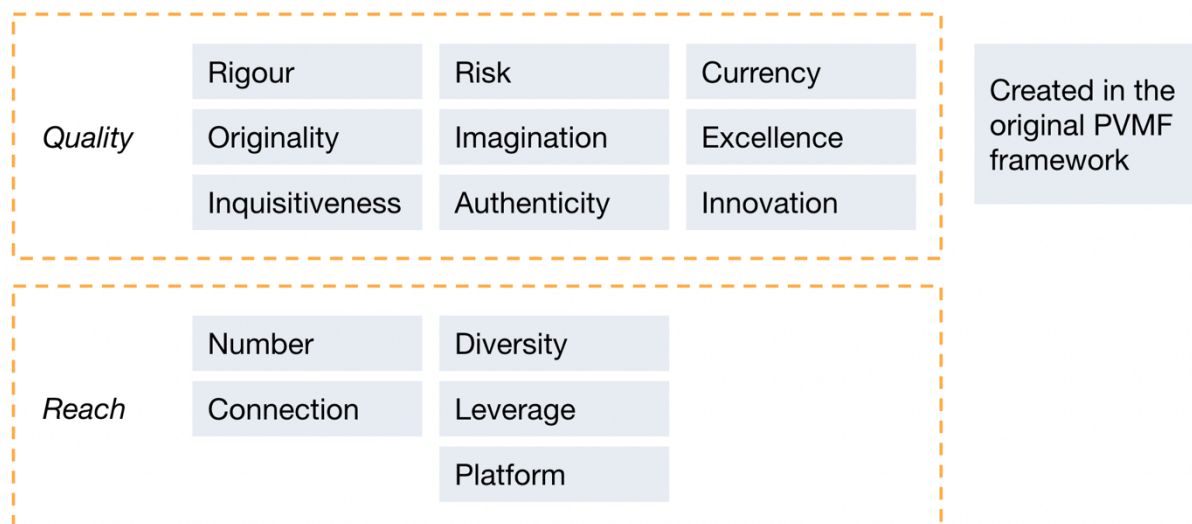
Over 600 Arts Council England-funded organisations (including National Portfolio Organisations [NPOs], National Lottery Project Grant Recipients, and many others) have voluntarily signed up to use the Toolkit since its new release on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2023. This report has been written as a resource for all these cultural sector users who are keen to better understand the origin and lineage of the different outcome measures in the Toolkit that they are now actively using in their evaluation activity.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://impactandinsight.co.uk>

# 2011 – 2014: PUBLIC VALUE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK TO THE MANCHESTER METRICS PILOT

## 2011: Public Value Measurement Framework



The concept of the dimensions and the first set of metrics were created as part of the Public Value Measurement Framework (PVMF) commissioned in 2011 by the Department of Culture and Arts (DCA) in Western Australia. This work was undertaken by Michael Chappell of Pracsys (Australia) and John Knell of Intelligence Agency (UK)<sup>2</sup>. This work and further development was later consolidated into the platform of Culture Counts.

The intention was to create a robust measurement system of intrinsic value that was simple, standardised, evidence-based, and had documented decision rules in place to guide decision-making for the funder about the value that its funded work was generating. The emphasis on standardisation was crucial, as it focussed attention on developing a common language to capture outcomes, which would then facilitate effective data aggregation and comparison over time. All the statements included in the PVMF needed to pass a rigour and credibility test in that they needed to effectively capture the practice and intentions of arts organisations, as well as satisfy the desire of the funder to account for the outcomes and value produced by those activities<sup>3</sup>.

Metrics were developed for quality, reach and impact through a process that involved a review of international best practice around the identification and measurement of the value created by the arts undertaken by the research team; peer review with other governmental bodies, in particular Arts Council England and other bodies and academics in Australia; and framework testing and metric generation with DCA funded organisations in Western Australia.

<sup>2</sup> Chappell and Knell (2012, 3)

<sup>3</sup> Chappell and Knell (2012, 8)

The quality dimension includes measures for creativity, rigour, authenticity, innovation and excellence. The reach dimension includes measures for audience numbers, diversity and the extent of connection with target communities of interest. Reach also encompasses the development capacity in communities of practice, the leverage of investment from non-DCA sources, and the extent to which the funded activities create platforms from which future activities can emerge. Impact is considered as a product of the quality and the reach of the output<sup>4</sup>.

The statements were then tested with users to ensure that they were understandable, along with the useability of the accompanying application. Following this testing a decision was made to remove the 4 reach dimensions (Number, Diversity, Leverage and Connection) from public surveys as it was thought members of the public would not have access to this information and consequently the questions would not be relevant<sup>5</sup>.

### **Statements created:**

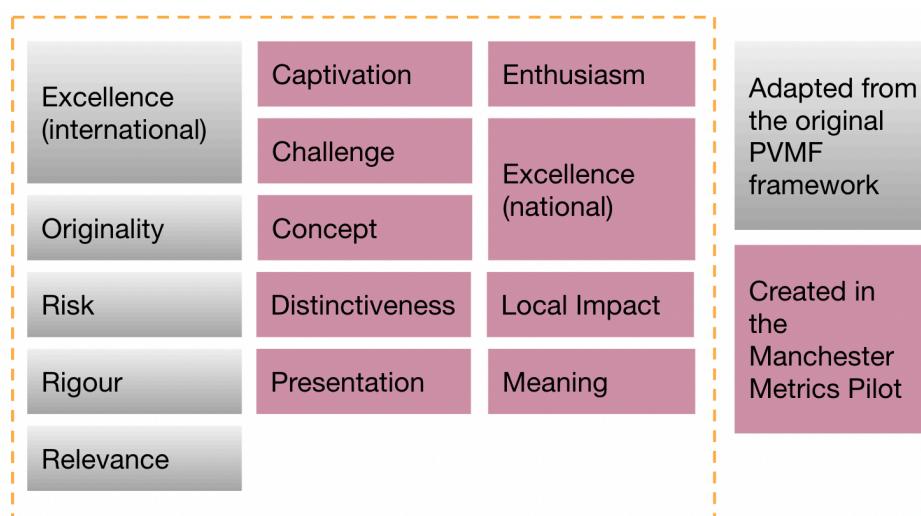
<i>Inquisitiveness:</i>	<i>It made me want to find out more</i>
<i>Imagination:</i>	<i>It explored a new point of view</i>
<i>Originality:</i>	<i>It was ground-breaking content</i>
<i>Risk:</i>	<i>The artists wasn't afraid to try new things</i>
<i>Rigour:</i>	<i>It seemed well-researched and put together</i>
<i>Currency:</i>	<i>It made me reflect on the world we live in today</i>
<i>Authenticity:</i>	<i>It was really West Australian</i>
<i>Innovation:</i>	<i>It connected creative ideas to the real world</i>
<i>Excellence:</i>	<i>I think it was the best of its type in the world</i>
<i>Diversity:</i>	<i>It could engage people from different backgrounds</i>
<i>Connection:</i>	<i>It moved and inspired me</i>
<i>Number:</i>	<i>It could appeal to new audiences</i>
<i>Platform:</i>	<i>It could work in other artforms</i>
<i>Leverage:</i>	<i>It could attract a variety of investors</i>

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<sup>4</sup> Chappell and Knell, 2012, 13

<sup>5</sup> Pracsys Economics, 2013, 22

## 2012: Manchester Metrics Pilot



The Manchester Metrics Pilot, which began in 2012, explored the practicalities and possibilities of a sector-led metrics framework to capture the quality and reach of arts and cultural productions, inspired by the PVMF project and using the Culture Counts platform which was created around the survey application developed as part of the PVMF project.

The pilot was supported by Arts Council England and a consortium of 13 ACE-funded organisations in the North West of England. This was a blank sheet of paper exercise, independent to the PVMF, asking the participating organisations to determine which key outcomes could best capture the quality and reach of cultural experiences and cultural production. The active involvement of the arts and cultural sector in this way was seen as fundamental to the creation of a credible and robust measurement framework for the quality of cultural experiences.

Without their input it was going to be difficult to build greater common language and currency about the value of the arts. The attraction to the cultural organisations in being asked to frame new metrics was the opportunity to shape a set of quality metrics that more fully reflected their creative ambitions and intentions.

The organisations identified 6 outcome areas: the Quality of the Product (Originality, Relevance, Risk, Finish); the Quality of Experience (Feelings, Attitudes, Behaviours, Understanding) and Quality and Depth of Engagement (Connection); Quality of Creative Process (Distinctiveness of practice, Technical Proficiency, Collaborator experience, Quality and diversity of workforce); Quality of Cultural Leadership (Clarity of objectives, Independence, Integrity, Local Impact) and Quality of Relationships and Partnerships (Value-adding partnerships<sup>6</sup>). These outcome areas were noted to be similar to those produced in Western Australia, particularly in the

<sup>6</sup> Knell, 2013

areas of Excellence, Originality, Risk and Relevance, and this consequently developed confidence in the overall credibility of the measurement framework.

Following the development of the initial outcome areas, organisations were invited to develop and refine metrics that could measure them in a series of workshops. The criteria for metric development included:

1. The metrics set could not be too large; a maximum of 10 statements for public respondents and 15 for self and peer assessors was agreed
2. The metrics for public assessment had to be defined in a way that a diversity of audience members and visitors could understand and respond to
3. The metrics had to be applicable to a number of different types of cultural experiences<sup>7</sup>

Through a process of sense-checking with the PVMF project and refinement, the final set of metrics included:

<i>Presentation:</i>	<i>It was well produced and presented</i>
<i>Distinctiveness:</i>	<i>It was different from things I've experienced before</i>
<i>Rigour:</i>	<i>It was well thought through and put together</i>
<i>Relevance:</i>	<i>It had something to say about the world in which we live</i>
<i>Challenge:</i>	<i>It was thought-provoking</i>
<i>Captivation:</i>	<i>It was absorbing and held my attention</i>
<i>Meaning:</i>	<i>It meant something to me personally</i>
<i>Enthusiasm:</i>	<i>I would come to something like this again</i>
<i>Local impact:</i>	<i>It is important that it's happening here</i>
<i>Concept:</i>	<i>It was an interesting idea/programme</i>
<i>Risk:</i>	<i>The artists/curators really challenged themselves with this work</i>
<i>Originality:</i>	<i>It was ground-breaking</i>
<i>Excellence (national):</i>	<i>It is amongst the best of its type in the UK</i>
<i>Excellence (global):</i>	<i>It is amongst the best of its type in the world</i>

These statements were tested with audiences in post-event interviews. While feedback on understanding the questions was not given for every survey, interviewers completed a feedback sheet at the end of each shift asking how people responded to the survey questions and the overall survey process<sup>8</sup>. It was identified that it would be useful to carry out some follow-up interviews or focus groups with audience members and visitors to explore how they understand and interpret individual metrics; how appropriate the questions feel in different settings and at different types of arts and cultural events; whether there are important aspects of quality that they think are not being fully captured by the survey<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Bunting and Knell, 2014, 9

<sup>8</sup> Bunting and Knell, 2014, 12

<sup>9</sup> Bunting and Knell, 2014, 60

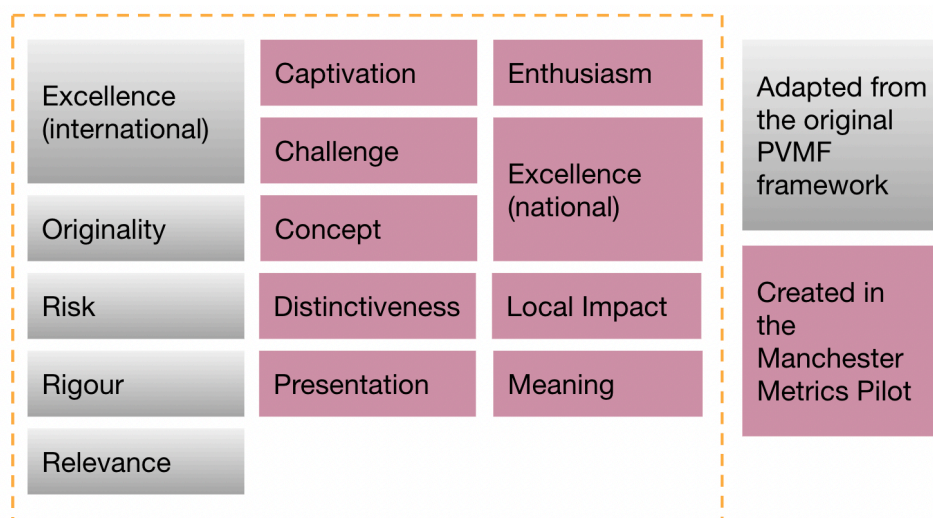
Note, that while the ‘dimensions’ outcome areas were similar to the PVMF, some statements were amended in the Manchester Metrics pilot. Rigour, Risk and Originality were like the dimensions included in the PVMF, although with slightly amended statements; Relevance was renamed from ‘Currency’ and Excellence was split into international excellence (best of its type in the world) and national excellence (best if its type in the UK).

The Manchester Metrics Pilot was seen effectively as a rigorous control-test on whether the system and the core quality metrics developed in WA was a credible approach to adopt<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Chappell and Knell, 2014, 17

## 2014 – 2015: NESTA DIGITAL R&D PROGRAMME



The Digital R&D Fund for the Arts was a £7 million pound fund supported by Nesta, Arts and Humanities Research Council and public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

Following on from the Manchester Metrics Pilot, HOME in Manchester was successful in their bid to the Digital R&D Fund to carry on a continuation project working with a consortium of 19 cultural organisations drawn from Manchester and across England<sup>11</sup>. The opportunity created by the Digital R&D award was to allow the participating cultural organisations to use and refine the metrics over a more prolonged period and allow all partners to conduct a preliminary assessment as to whether the metrics and the Culture Counts method of data collection had the potential to be a truly effective measurement and evaluation approach.

The project found that there was clear interest in a scalable, cost-effective way of sharing question forms and processes for data collection which allow cultural organisations to benchmark their work with their peers.

It was also concluded that there is policy value to arts funding bodies in trialling quantitative metrics for quality assessment, which could reduce costs and avoid the perceived problems of subjective qualitative data.

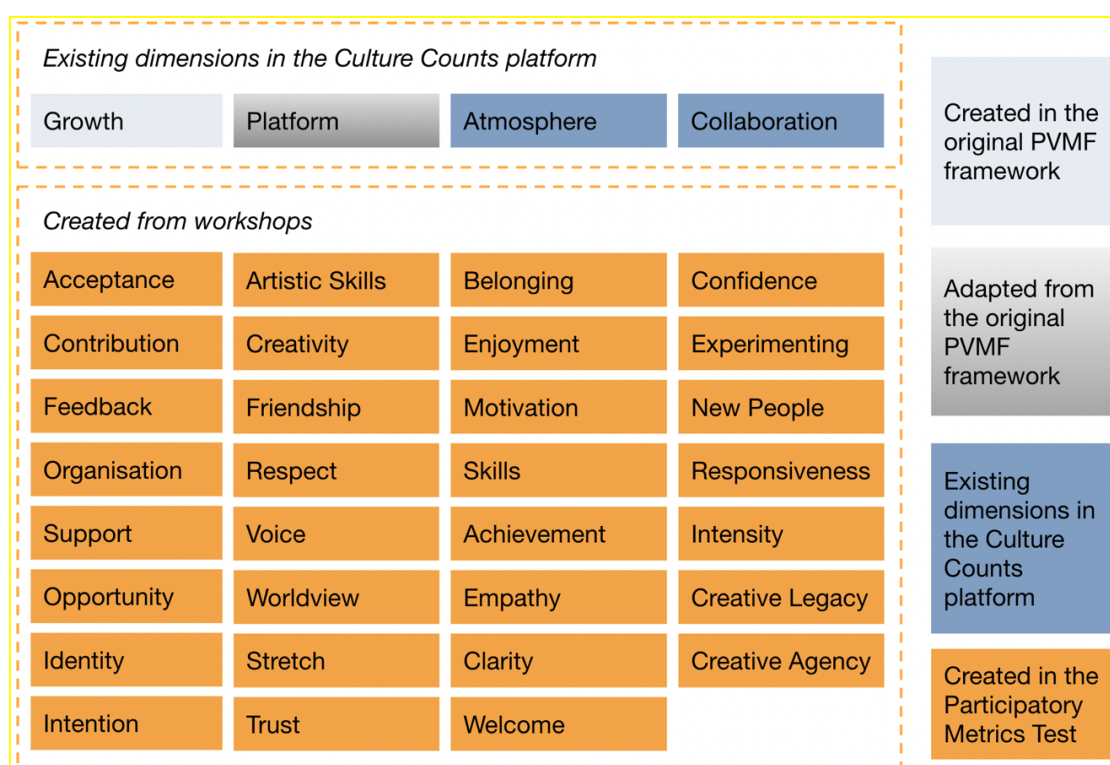
The project saw another important step in the development of outcome dimensions. The cultural partners on the project quickly identified the need to properly develop some quality of participatory experience metrics which could be used within the evaluation activity being supported by the R&D award to the project. With some further support from Arts Council England, the cultural organisations within the

<sup>11</sup> Arvanitis, Bunting, Florack, Gilmore, Knell and Merriman, 2015

consortium were facilitated by Culture Counts to develop a new set of participatory metrics, modelling their potential use against recent of planned participatory events.

The development of the participatory metrics followed a similar process to previous iterations, working with a cohort of 7 organisations who are expert in this area of work to develop a set of metrics which had transferability between different types of practices<sup>12</sup>.

These metrics were also sense-checked against Arts Council England's Children and Young People's Quality Principles. The metric clusters developed in the workshops (conducive environment; experience; participant development) map comprehensively across the seven CYP quality principles<sup>13</sup>.



From the list of dimensions generated from these workshops, 4 existing Culture Counts dimensions were chosen as being relevant: 2 of these were from the PVMF set of metrics, 'Growth' and 'Platform', and 2 were later additions, 'Collaboration' and 'Atmosphere'.

Interestingly, 'Growth' and 'Platform' were dimensions that had been identified in the earlier PVMF test as not relevant to public audiences.

<sup>12</sup> Knell and Whitaker, 2016b

<sup>13</sup> Knell and Whitaker, 2016b, 5

## 2015 – 2017: DEVELOPMENT BY CULTURE COUNTS AUSTRALIA

The focus of Culture Counts in Australia has been on developing a framework of outcomes that can cover a broad range of potential impacts, to support clients ranging from arts and cultural organisations to civic organisations.

### 2015: Place Quality Dimensions

Accessibility	Community	Mobility	Vibe	Created by Culture Counts for Place Quality
Atmosphere	Destination	Quality	Vibrancy	
Character	Dining	Recreation		
Choice	Events	Safety		
Comfort	Facilities	Unique		

In 2015, Culture Counts Australia developed the Place Quality dimensions. These are focussed on the qualities and amenities of public places, derived from, and facilitated by, their planning, design and management, rather than the quality of a cultural experience.

## 2017: Adoption of CDN Schema in Culture Counts

Collaboration	Access	Cultural Contribution	Place	Created by Culture Counts during adoption of the CDN schema
Expression	Aesthetic Experience	Curiosity	Positivity	
Heritage	Activity	Decision-making	Practice Development	
Interpretation	Authenticity	Equality	Pride	
Learning	Awareness	Inclusion	Profile	
Perspective	Bond	Insight	Prospects	
Understanding	Celebration	Leadership	Reflect	
	Communication	Membership	Relationships	
	Contemporary Art	Independence	Resilience	
	Content	Nature	Respect	
	Creativity	Networks	Safe	
		Participation	Wellbeing	

In 2017, Culture Counts aligned with the Cultural Development Network's (CDN) outcome schema as an approach to organising and structuring the dimensions. The CDN schema was designed to demonstrate both intrinsic and instrumental impacts across Civic, Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural domains<sup>14</sup>.

An additional 'Arts Quality' domain was created by Culture Counts to accommodate the original PVMF and Quality Metrics dimensions alongside the broader CDN-inspired schema.

Existing dimensions were reviewed through the lens of the CDN schema and allocated to the five domains, with new dimensions created to fill the gaps. The majority of these dimensions were added in 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, 2018, 10

## 2015 – 2017: QUALITY METRICS NATIONAL TEST



Following the successful pilot projects, Arts Council England invited Culture Counts to deliver a national test of the quality metrics to examine the validity and applicability of the framework across a diverse range of organisations in the Arts Council's National Portfolio.

The National Test sought to recruit 150 organisations, including National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) and Major Partner Museums (MPMs), to use the quality metrics created thus far and the Culture Counts platform to evaluate three events, exhibitions or performances each between November 2015 and May 2016.

During the test, 374 evaluations were conducted by the NPOs/MPMs using the quality metrics, resulting in 1,358 self assessments, 921 peer assessments and 19.8k public survey responses.

### Quality Metrics National Test evaluation

An evaluation of the Quality Metrics National Test was commissioned by Arts Council England and carried out by Nordicity to evaluate the experience of the organisations participating in the National Test. This was done through a survey of participating organisations and peer assessors, along with a series of focus groups and interviews with stakeholders. These were supplemented with interviews of organisations that chose to not participate, organisations with a diversity focus, the developers of both the metrics and the digital platform, as well as potential alternative platform providers, and the Department of Culture and the Arts in Western Australia<sup>15</sup>.

A number of areas were identified by organisations as being in need of further development. One of the main suggestions were of 'missing' dimensions to capture quality in relation to accessibility and diversity. Some organisations raised concerns

<sup>15</sup> Nordicity, 2016, 1

about some of the dimensions being too “abstract” or using “sector speak”, with some reporting that they had to proactively support staff in understanding the metrics in order to gather responses from audiences<sup>16</sup>. Concerns were also raised about using the same set of dimensions for everyone, offering a “one size fits all” solution that could cover the variety of disciplines and art forms in the portfolio and the varying target audiences<sup>17</sup>.

However, overall, the evaluation found that survey respondents were broadly positive about the Quality Metrics dimensions, with 62% of respondents believing that their organisation was very likely or somewhat likely to use the Quality Metrics dimensions in the future. In particular, the dimensions Enthusiasm, Presentation and Captivation were seen as being very suitable for measuring quality by the majority of respondents<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Nordicity, 2016, 18

<sup>17</sup> Nordicity, 2016, 20

<sup>18</sup> Nordicity, 2016, 14

## Accessibility Test

Following the development of the Quality and Participatory Metrics, Shared Intelligence, The Mighty Creatives and Sarah Pickthall, a specialist in disability inclusive best practice, were commissioned by Arts Council England in December 2016 to test the accessibility of the Quality and Participatory Metrics that had been developed by and with the sector, to help organisations understand and measure the quality of their work. The test reported on whether the metrics were accessible and comprehensible to four core groups<sup>19</sup>:

1. Children and young people
2. People with disability and other additional or complex needs
3. People for whom English is not their primary language
4. People living in areas of low socioeconomic status

This was done through four engagement events which enabled the research team to get a feel for the comprehensibility, applicability and accessibility of the statements for different groups in different circumstances, shortly after taking part in a cultural experience. The main research tool was observation of participants' responses to the metrics, with further probing questions about whether the participant understood what the statement was saying, whether the language made sense and whether it applies to their experience. If statements were found not to be comprehensible, applicable or accessible then amendments would be co-produced with the participants<sup>20</sup>.

The research team found that the majority of statements were well understood by people in all groups<sup>21</sup>. However, Presentation, Respect, Authenticity and Intention were found by all groups to have scope for amendment. Other amendments for one of the groups were suggested for Concept, Challenge, Local Impact, Relevance, Contribution, Artistic Skills, Empathy, Motivation, and Welcome. For almost all the statements, a need was identified to have statements variants that could apply to a mediator answering on behalf of another participant, for example a carer.

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<sup>19</sup> Shared Intelligence et al. 2017

<sup>20</sup> Shared Intelligence et al., 2017, 9

<sup>21</sup> Shared Intelligence et al., 2017, 2

# 2018 – 2023: IMPACT & INSIGHT TOOLKIT

## Arts Council England Core and Participatory Dimensions

Core - all respondents

Rigour

Relevance

Concept

Captivation

Distinctiveness

Challenge

Core - peer and self assessors only

Excellence

Originality

Risk

Adapted from the original PVMF framework

Participatory - all respondents

Acceptance

Contribution

Feedback

Organisation

Support

Artistic Skills

Creativity

Friendship

Voice

Stretch

Belonging

Enjoyment

Motivation

Skills

Identity

Confidence

Experimenting

New People

Responsiveness

Empathy

Created in the Manchester Metrics Pilot

Created in the Participatory Metrics Test

The learnings from the Manchester Metrics Pilot; the Nesta Digital R&D Fund project; the Quality Metrics National Test and Participatory Metrics were integrated into the Impact & Insight Toolkit, which was commissioned as a tool to be used by NPO and other ACE-funded organisations and projects from 2018-2022 (later extended to 2023 due to the Coronavirus pandemic). Band 2 and 3 NPOs were initially required to use dimensions from the Core or Participatory list of dimensions. Note, this was a reduced list from the original National Test set of dimensions.

### ACE Core Dimensions:

#### Public

- *Captivation:* It was absorbing and held my attention
- *Challenge:* It was thought-provoking
- *Concept:* It was an interesting idea
- *Distinctiveness:* It was different from things I've experienced before
- *Relevance:* It has something to say about the world in which we live
- *Rigour:* It was well thought through and put together

#### Self and peer reviewer only

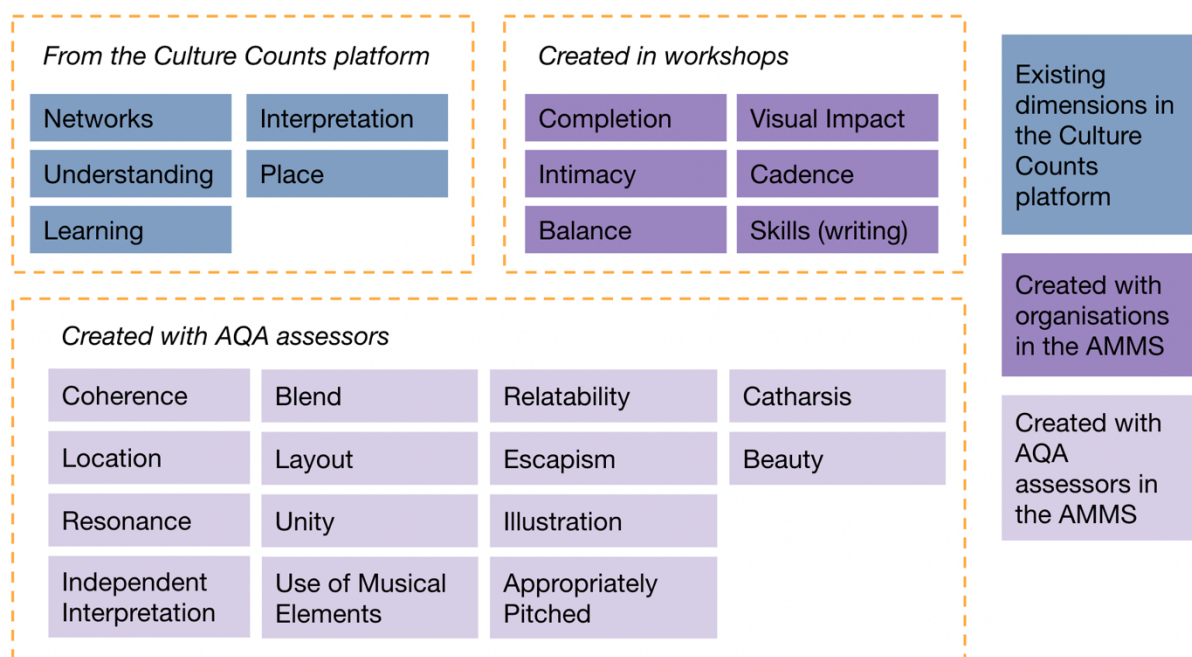
- *Excellence:* It's one of the best examples of its type that I have experienced
- *Originality:* It was ground-breaking
- *Risk:* The artists/curators really challenged themselves with this work

## ACE Participatory Dimensions:

- *Organisation:* *The project was well organised*
- *Responsiveness:* *The organisers responded well to the needs of the group*
- *Support:* *People in the group supported each other*
- *Acceptance:* *I felt like I could be myself*
- *Belonging:* *They made me feel part of the team*
- *Voice:* *My ideas were taken seriously*
- *Enjoyment:* *I had a good time*
- *Experimenting:* *I felt comfortable trying new things*
- *Friendship:* *I felt close to other people involved in the project*
- *New People:* *I got to know people who are different to me*
- *Contribution:* *I felt that my contribution mattered*
- *Feedback:* *I got helpful feedback*
- *Artistic Skills:* *I improved my artistic skills*
- *Confidence:* *I feel more confident about doing new things*
- *Creativity:* *I feel more able to express myself creatively*
- *Empathy:* *It helped me understand other people's points of view*
- *Identity:* *It helped me to see myself differently*
- *Motivation:* *I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future*
- *Skills:* *I gained new skills*
- *Stretch:* *I did something I didn't know I was capable of*

This was later opened up, allowing organisations to choose from a more flexible set of dimensions that were available in the Culture Counts dimensions dashboard.

## Art Form and Museum Metrics Development Strand



The Art Form and Museum Metrics Development strand (AMMS) began in 2019 to develop new sets of metrics with NPOs that responded to the specific experiences of individual artforms and museums.

The metrics were developed and refined through a series of workshops held in London, Birmingham and Manchester. The workshops began by trying to understand shared outcomes and unique outcomes for particular forms of cultural production, before exploring and creating new dimensions which would be specific to these outcomes.

192 organisations had registered their interest in being involved in this strand of metric development, and 65 different organisations participated in the workshops.

An important finding of the workshops was that many of the outcomes NPOs wanted to measure were already covered by the existing core metrics, and those in attendance struggled to create new artform specific metrics. Most additional dimensions suggested by attendees were also applicable across multiple artforms. Some of the outcomes suggested already existed in the Culture Counts platform from other projects<sup>22</sup>.

The dimensions created in the workshops were supplemented by dimensions co-produced with Arts Council England's Arts and Quality Assessment Assessors, who are specialists in their respective fields.

<sup>22</sup> Impact & Insight Toolkit, 2020, 5

These dimensions have not yet been widely used by organisations and have not been tested with audiences and participants.

## **Place-based Research Project**

A place-based research project was begun in 2022 as part of the Impact & Insight Toolkit. The project involved working with cultural organisations which had a focus on place-based working, to develop and test new metrics for evaluating place-based work.

Through workshops with the participating organisations, a definition of ‘working in place’ was developed and different types of place-based working were described. This context was then used to develop a set of metrics which could be used to evaluate place-based works.

The metrics that were created could be grouped into categories: place-specific and place-agnostic. Although the project was focussed on place-based working, some of the new outcomes which are important for place-based working would be relevant for other types of work (place-agnostic), whereas others would be significantly more relevant for work which is place focussed (place-specific).

After the metrics were created by the group, they were then used in evaluations to see which metrics were more popular, collect some data for the metrics which could be used to assess their quality, and create some initial benchmarks which could be used in analysis.

The final results of this project are yet to be published at the time of writing (November 2023).

## 2023 – 2026: IMPACT & INSIGHT TOOLKIT

In preparation for the launch of the second iteration of the Toolkit in April 2023, a comprehensive review of the dimensions in the Culture Counts platform was undertaken and they were organised into a dimensions schema. The goal was to create a coherent framework which arts and cultural organisations could use to explore the landscape of qualities and outcomes and select metrics which were applicable for their work.

The first addition which resulted from this process was the Dimensions Framework<sup>23</sup> – a downloadable spreadsheet which describes the different outcome domains and includes some tools for selecting metrics and planning evaluations.



**CultureCounts**

*Clicking on the domain name will take you to the list of dimensions for that domain.*

Qualities	Subjective assessments about the experience, content or perception of an artwork or performance; or the quality of the facilitation of a participatory process. These are the qualities of a work that may enable other outcomes.
Perception	About the subjective quality of the final work, performance, or product. For example, its professionalism, presentation or status within a particular region or field.
Content	About the content, message or idea of the work, For example, relevance to particular communities.
Experience	About the experiential and affective qualities of the work. For example, being interested, stimulated or absorbed by a work.
Facilitation	About the process or conditions that facilitate the experience. For example, feeling safe, welcome, heard and able to express yourself.
Local Impact	About the value a work has for a particular place. For example, contributing to the local cultural landscape or raising the profile of the area.

The second addition was the inclusion of a Dimensions Library and Dimensions Selector in the Culture Counts platform. This new tool reflects the same dimensions as the Dimensions Framework, and allows users of Culture Counts to create re-usable lists of dimensions which can quickly and easily be inserted into surveys and evaluations.

### Dimension Library

Qualities	↕
Cultural Outcomes	↕
Social Outcomes	↕
Economic Outcomes	↕
Community Outcomes	↕
Placemaking	↕
Environmental Outcomes	↕

### 1 Name Dimension List

New Dimension List

### 2 Add Dimensions

**No Dimensions Added**  
Add your first Dimension from the Dimension Library

Cancel

Save list

<sup>23</sup> <https://impactandinsight.co.uk/resource/dimensions-framework/>

## CONCLUSION

As CWC embarked upon this work in 2011/2012 there were growing calls across the cultural sector that cultural organisations urgently needed to be able to present a more rigorous account of the value they create and embrace the importance of data-led insights in refining what they do<sup>24</sup>. In particular, it was perceived that there had been a lack of progress towards:

1. Standardising an approach to metric statements and measurement.
2. Establishing the full involvement of the cultural sector in developing those metrics.
3. Developing methods of data collection and automated analysis and reporting that have the capacity to produce bigger data sets and results at low cost and effort, which can help build a more developed data culture across the cultural sector.
4. Challenging the perceived difficulty in gathering and harnessing data in this form, allied to data and evaluation expertise gaps across the cultural sector.
5. Standardising a set of metrics that could open up the possibility to aggregate impacts across similar institutions, art forms, funding programmes, geographies, time periods, or any other abstract characteristics.

Pulling this report together has served to emphasise the huge progress that has been made in addressing these shortfalls over recent years. Two other reflections also stand out:

- How generous the cultural sector has been in giving up their time and expertise to help us develop the dimensions in the Toolkit. We thank them for commitment and contributions.
- That the concerns expressed by some critics of this work – namely that it would lead to ‘narrow’ measurement of the quality and reach of cultural experiences; and inappropriate benchmarking analysis through Ofsted type league tables of funded organisations – have proved to be totally unfounded.

Crucially, the Impact & Insight Toolkit continues to dynamically evolve with CWC soon to release a new set of ‘working in place’ dimensions, developed with a pilot group of 20 Toolkit users between March 2022 and March 2023.

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<sup>24</sup> See the work of Lilley and Moore - <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/research/topic/music-drama-dance-performing-arts-film-and-screen-studies/projects/counting-what-counts>

We hope Toolkit users, and others, find this report a useful resource. If you have any ideas or comments on how the outcome measurements in the Toolkit can be improved and refined, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

Counting What Counts is always working on new additions and improvements to the dimensions, and we hope that, by the end of the current Toolkit project in March 2026, we will have left the sector an important legacy – namely, a co-produced set of outcome measures that will continue to have strong sector support, and, perhaps more importantly, a rich history of dynamic evaluative use.

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