

Evaluation practice and approaches: arts/ cultural and science festivals

- Background and experience in both sectors (eg Step Up, hcmf; MSF, Robotics)
- Evaluator and commissioning evaluation
- Innovative and “run of the mill”
- Summative demographic baseline and/ or formative creative consultation
- Sweeping generalisations – “no smoke without fire”
- A tale of two festivals to illustrate...



Manchester Science Festival

- Commissioned external evaluation
- Why?
 - For funders
 - New festival - proof of model and profile/ impact
 - Built in from start
 - Informing work in future years
- Focus in 2007 (demographic baseline/ evaluator: science background)
- ...in 2008 (learning; organisational model/ evaluator: museums/ galleries background)



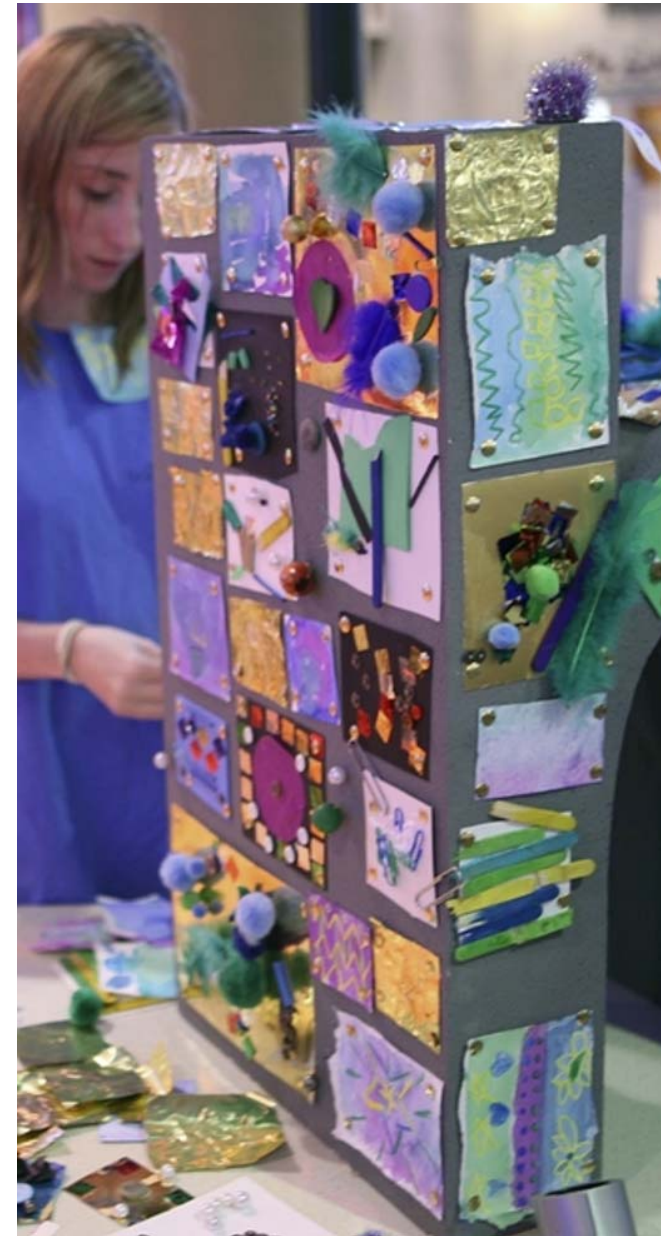
Step Up

- NW schools arts festival (2003-06)
- Commissioned external evaluation
- Why?
 - For funders
 - Measure impacts - creative learning and organisational model
 - Sharing and disseminating findings
- Two stand-alone years (03 & 04); two interlinked years (05-06)



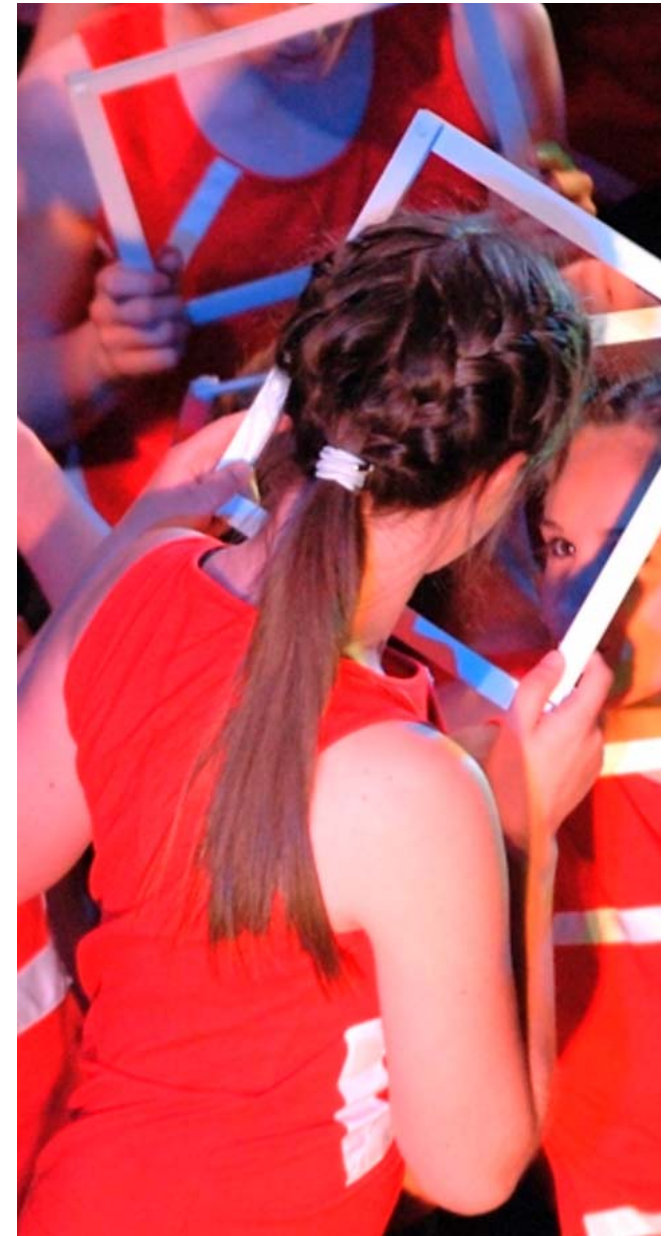
Common ground

- “Festival” model – collected/ focused; greater than sum of its parts
- Impacts focused on communication, engagement, and outreach
- Evaluating for funders
- Concerns over cost and/or time



Differences

- “Festival” models
- Sectors: not-for-profit/ subsidised or academic/ private
- Internal/ external evaluation
- Sharing and disseminating
- Orientation: audience/ participant or organisation/ institution
- Complexity of programming leading evaluation approach
- Focus and style of evaluation (understanding/ learning, formal/ informal, baseline/ creative consultation)



Big themes across the sectors

- Evaluation as organisational learning about process and outcomes
- Motivation: advocacy \leftrightarrow research
- Learning from each other – approach, style, orientation, format, reporting



Implications

- Reflective learning cycle: do – reflect – adapt – do again
- Real dialogue involves a real risk of change
- Good audience development is someone saying no



Ideas for where to find out more

- Felicity Woolf (search on Arts Council England)
- Voluntary Arts Network
- Frameworks: Every Child Matters, Inspiring Learning for All, etc
- Get in touch – www.lauraHdrane.com

