

An assessment of the social impact of art learning programmes

A Rapid Evidence Assessment September 2011



Department of
**Culture, Arts
and Leisure**
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MINISTERE O
Fowlgates, Airts
an Aiseidom
AN ROINN
Cultúr, Falaíon
agus Fóillíochta

Key points and Recommendations

- ◆ A Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) is a review of literature designed to answer a specific question.
- ◆ An REA was carried out to assess research that measured the impact of arts learning programmes on marginalised groups and families.
- ◆ There was some evidence that arts programmes impact on learning outcomes, social inclusion, re-engaging in learning and attendance for marginalised groups and families.
- ◆ The REA demonstrated that there is a need to increase the evidence base to demonstrate the impact of arts through research and evaluation and to improve the quality of arts research.



Educational impact of arts programmes

A Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) was carried out to assess the impact of arts learning programmes on marginalised groups and families. The fourteen studies selected in the REA are summarised on pages 2-5.

One of the areas highlighted in the REA is the impact that arts programmes have on learning outcomes. The studies measured a range of social and educational outcomes across a number of groups.

Marginalised preschool children: There was some evidence that arts programmes can increase learning outcomes for marginalised preschool children (Bilhartz, Bruhn and Olson, 1999). However, further research would be needed to identify if the outcomes are related

to other factors such as parental involvement.

Marginalised school age students: There was good evidence that there were social and educational learning outcomes for marginalised school age students participating in arts programmes. Arts Council England (2006), Wright, John, Alaggia and Sheel (2006), Betts (2006) and Wilkin, Gulliver and Kinder (2005) showed an increase in social skills and an increase in learning an arts form for marginalised students.

Students with disabilities: There was some evidence that arts programmes have social and educational outcomes for students with disabilities. Lapka (2006) studied the effects of an integrated school

band where the special education teacher believed the benefits of inclusion were academic (music education), personal (self esteem) and social and that students with and without disabilities benefited from the experience.

Other marginalised groups: The evidence in relation to other marginalised groups was inconclusive.

Families: Tayler et al (2006) found that parents did report that their children had learned new things and the experience was a catalyst for later learning. However, overall, the evidence in relation to families was inconclusive.

It is recommended that the impact of arts programmes on learning is explored through further research.

Social impacts of arts learning programmes

There is some evidence to suggest that arts programmes have other social impacts for marginalised groups and families.

Social inclusion: There was evidence that arts programmes can impact positively on social inclusion. Lapka (2006) and Borrell, Boulet and Smith (2002) demonstrated arts programmes that provided students with disabilities and marginalised women opportunities for social inclusion.

Re-engaging in learning: While there was no evidence

that arts programmes changed attitudes of marginalised students towards school, there was evidence that participation in arts programmes could contribute towards reengaging marginalised students back into education by changing students attitudes towards learning (Arts Council England, 2006 and Betts, 2006).

Behaviour: There was some evidence that arts learning programmes impact on behaviour of marginalised students.

Wilkin, Gulliver and Kinder (2005) reported that the majority of pupils felt that being involved in arts programmes had had a positive impact on their behaviour.

Engagement in the arts: There was inconclusive evidence that arts programmes would increase attendance or participation in the arts.

There have been a number of evaluations that suggest the findings from the REA are applicable to Northern Ireland (DCAL, 2011).

<p>“THE CHOICE OF VENUE HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT IN THAT IT WAS A NEUTRAL SPACE WELL AWAY FROM THE USUAL YOUTH WORK ACTIVITIES”</p> <p>Arts Council England (2006)</p>	<p>A drama enrichment programme, Arts Council England (2006) Maryland Scale 2, methodologically average</p> <p>Based in the UK, the study assessed the effectiveness of a drama programme in engaging socially excluded young people and enhancing the skills they needed to re-engage in education and training.</p> <p>The results showed that the young people participating in the drama programme showed an increase in social skills including confidence, emotion and conflict awareness and ability to work as a team. The young people also showed an increase in attitudes to learning.</p> <p>An important part of the programme was the active involvement of the young people’s key workers. The study suggested that the attitudes of the young people towards their key workers improved. Key workers also reported improved positive attitudes to the young people they were supporting.</p> <p>The management of the programme also contributed its success with choice of venue, time management and provision of refreshments having a positive impact on the participation levels of the group.</p>
<p>“THIS STUDY SUGGESTS A SIGNIFICANT CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN EARLY MUSIC INSTRUCTION AND SPATIAL-TEMPORAL REASONING ABILITIES.”</p> <p>Bilhartz, Bruhn and Olson (1999)</p>	<p>Kindermusik for the Young Child , Bilhartz, Bruhn and Olson (1999) Maryland Scale 3, methodologically average</p> <p>Based in the USA, the researchers were interested in exploring the relationship between participation in a structured music curriculum and cognitive development in low, middle and high income families.</p> <p>The study involved Kindermusik, a programme of music and movement for children from birth to seven years of age.</p> <p>The study found that there was a significant link between early music instruction and cognitive growth in specific non-music abilities.</p> <p>However, the difference was not uniform across all income groups with children from high income groups outperforming children from low and middle income groups.</p> <p>Children with highly involved parents were more likely to perform better. The researchers found a strong correlation between levels of parental involvement and higher post treatment scores, underlying ‘the importance of parental activities as an influence in the cognitive development’ of children’ (Bilhartz, Bruhn and Olson (1999).</p>
<p>“THERE WERE BENEFITS FOR ALL INVOLVED. TUTORS LEARNED BY ASSISTING OTHERS. STUDENTS IMPROVED FROM THE HELP OF TUTORS. ”</p> <p>Lapka (2006)</p>	<p>Students with disabilities into a high school band, Lapka (2006) Maryland Scale 1, methodologically average</p> <p>Based in the USA, the research revolved around a case study of a high school band which had integrated special education students in their band programme.</p> <p>The case study demonstrated a number of impacts of the integrated school choir. Parents were pleased to see their children involved in mainstream activities. Students with disabilities could learn about music while having greater social interaction with others. Students without disabilities saw the value of inclusion and having the opportunity to interact with people with disabilities.</p> <p>The case study also demonstrated how to develop a successful integrated school band for students with and without disabilities.</p> <p>Along with curriculum modifications and use of peer tutors, there was a close collaboration between the special education teacher and the band director which contributed to the success of the choir.</p> <p>Teacher’s attitudes were important to the success of the band with both the band director and special education teacher believing in the benefits of inclusion.</p>
<p>“PERCEIVED YOUTH GAINS INCLUDED INCREASED CONFIDENCE, ENHANCED ART SKILLS, IMPROVED PROSOCIAL SKILLS AND IMPROVED CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS. ”</p> <p>Wright, John, Alaggia and Sheel (2006)</p>	<p>National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project (NAYDP), Wright, John, Alaggia and Sheel (2006) Maryland Scale 2, methodologically average</p> <p>Based in Canada, the research aimed to determine if community-based arts organisations can successfully recruit, engage and sustain youths from low-income communities (9-15 years old) through an after school programme.</p> <p>The nine month programme focused on theatre, visual arts and media arts.</p> <p>The youths participating in the programme showed an increase in arts and social skills during the programme.</p> <p>The programme was successful at recruiting youth from low-income families. Sustained participation was enhanced by a number of factors. For the youths, making new friends, learning about theatre and good project staff were important. Parents reported that free transportation was important.</p> <p>Parents and youths identified some limitations in relation to transport and the quality and quantity of snacks. The parents said that they did not always get enough notice of performances and felt left out of the programme.</p>

A study of a choir for homeless people, Bailey and Davidson (2005)

Maryland Scale 1, methodologically weak

Based in Canada, two Canadian choirs aimed at homeless and marginalised singers were studied to determine the impact of participating in group singing.

There were a number of differences between the two choirs. Choir 1 was a male only choir while choir 2 targeted male and female participants. The researchers aimed to assess if par-

ticipation in the choirs impacted on participants regardless of the type of choir, culture, director, membership, style and sponsorship.

The results suggested that there were emotional, social and cognitive benefits to participation in group singing and that the effects of group singing are independent of formal training

and ability. There was no substantial difference based on training or choir type.

There were a number of concerns with the control groups mentioned in the research. As a result, it is difficult to conclude that the positive changes were a result of group singing and not just as a result of participation

“THE RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION WITH CHOIR 2 REINFORCED THE EMOTIONAL, SOCIAL AND COGNITIVE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION IN GROUP SINGING”
Bailey and Davidson (2005)

Multimedia Arts Educational Programme (MAEP), Betts (2006)

Maryland Scale 2, methodologically weak

Based in the USA, Multimedia Arts Educational Programme (MAEP) used art education with electronic tools including computer graphics, video production and desktop publishing.

MAEP developed from other successful after schools programmes with the idea of focusing on arts technology to give young people skills that would

be useful in an arts workplace.

The research showed that parents reported a positive impact on the student as a result of the programme. Students reported improvement in literacy, technology, design and social abilities during the programme. Students' attitudes towards work, school, art and the community did not change over the

course of the programme.

The researcher stated that he participated in the development of the programme guidelines and curriculum as well as carrying out the research. There may be a certain element of bias from the researcher towards some of the conclusions. As a result, they need to be viewed with a degree of caution.

“STUDENTS REPORTED THAT THEY WERE USING THEIR NEW SKILLS IN A VARIETY OF WAYS BOTH IN AND OUTSIDE SCHOOL ”
Betts (2006)

International Women's Day, Borrell, Boulet and Smith (2002)

Maryland Scale 1, methodologically weak

Based in Australia, young women living in the City of Port Philip were invited to participate in an arts project and an exhibition to celebrate International Women's Day. The target group were homeless, transient and marginalised young women aged 18-25, including Koori women.

The researchers concluded that

there were two overall impacts to the women participating in the programme. Participants reported that they enjoyed the opportunity to socialise with other people and breaking through some social barriers associated with their past and current life experiences.

Participants also reported that it made them feel good about

being women and being inspired by other women.

The researchers stated that one of the downsides of the programme was that it came to an end just as the women were getting to know each other. The researchers recommended that there was continuity and security of funding of similar types of projects.

“THOSE INTERVIEWED EXPRESSED GREATER FEELINGS OF SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS. ”
Borrell, Boulet and Smith (2002)

A community cultural development initiative, Buys and Miller (2009)

Maryland Scale 1, methodologically weak

Based in Australia, the study investigated the extent which children from disadvantaged areas participating in community cultural development initiatives might build social capital.

The programme involved two schools with children from one school developing a CD of original music and children from the second school designing

artwork for a library courtyard.

Participants reported that participation in the programme facilitated the students' belief in themselves, in their own skills and contributions. An environment of trust was also created between the children and the artist with a move away from traditional instructor-student relationships. The artists' use of

the children's ideas, the artist being non-judgemental and the fun nature of the activities were key reasons identified by the children that contributed to the enjoyment of the programme.

The researchers stated that this was a pilot study and results should be interpreted in context with the limitations of the design of the study.

“COMMUNITY-BASED ARTS INITIATIVE WITHIN SCHOOLS MAY SERVE AS A VEHICLE FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL. ”
Buys and Miller (2009)

“THE ARTS PROVIDE

A VEHICLE TO INVOLVE CHILDREN IN ACTIVITIES, BECAUSE THEY PARTICIPATE WILLINGLY”

Hutinger (1998)

Expressive Arts Project, Hutinger (1998)

Maryland Scale 2, methodologically weak

Based in the USA, the aim of the Expressive Arts Project was to ensure that young children with disabilities have access to the benefits of the arts that young children without disabilities engage in.

Appropriate adaptations can be used to integrate children with moderate to severe disabilities in activities that their less dis-

abled peers engage in.

Children were rated on cognitive, communication, social, gross motor, fine motor and visual arts skills. The researcher stated that all children in the evaluation demonstrated growth in knowledge and abilities in all areas. However, with a lack of a control group, it was difficult to conclude that the

growth demonstrated by the children in the programme was as a result of the programme itself or as a result of other factors.

The project did have a family element to the programme but the researcher did not report on the level of family participation other than some families were more involved than others.

“LINE DANCING

INDEED LEADS TO ADDITIONAL SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND THAT THESE ACTIVITIES HAVE REAL BENEFITS FOR OLDER WOMEN”

Nadasen (2008)

The impact of line dancing on older women, Nadasen (2008)

Maryland Scale 1, methodologically weak

Based in South Africa, this study investigated non-physical benefits to a group of older women who were members of a line dancing group. The researchers aimed to assess if there were non-physical benefits to exercise or dance classes to complement other research on women and aging.

The participants in the research

reported that their social lives had improved as a result of line dancing. Participants also said that participating in line dancing increased their social consciousness. Many of the participants said that as a result of line dancing, they participated in other activities that benefited the community.

Some of the participants had

also learned other dance forms and learning line dancing had also encouraged them to continue to learn in other areas.

However, it was difficult to conclude whether the line dancing resulted in increased socialisation or whether people who were more social were more likely to line dance. The results were inconclusive.

“UNEXPECTED OUTCOMES INCLUDED TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE TO THE CLASSROOM AND HOME ENVIRONMENTS”

Seeman (2008)

The impact of rhythm and rhyme on preschool children, Seeman (2008)

Maryland Scale 2, methodologically weak

Based in the USA. The study focused on how music in the early childhood curriculum increased language skills.

Focusing on rhythm and rhyme, students participated in musical activities for 10 weeks. The music activities were planned to include progression from simple to more challenging musical and linguistic elements.

Students' receptive vocabulary increased over the course of the programme.

The teacher rated the students in three areas of language – communication of personal experiences, recognition and production of rhymes and use of carried vocabulary. There was improvement for a number of students in the three areas with

most students showing improvement in the area of communication of personal experiences.

The researcher was involved in both the delivery of the music programme and the research itself. Therefore, some caution needs to be taken when interpreting the results as there was no discussion of bias in the study.

“RESULTS SHOWED A

SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE STUDENTS' SELF PERCEPTION OF MUSICAL COMPETENCE”

Shields (2001)

Music education, Shields (2001)

Maryland Scale 2, methodologically weak

Based in the USA, the aim of the study was to describe the role and importance of music education as an intervention for marginalised urban adolescents. Through participation in performance groups, marginalised students also received mentoring.

The results show that there was no significant difference in pre

and post tests for scholastic competence, social acceptance, physical appearance, behavioural conduct and global self worth. There was a significant difference in pre and post test for musical competence.

The researcher concluded that having a high percentage of students participating in the programmes caused some prob-

lems for the teachers in terms of disruption in the classroom. However, it is unclear where the evidence for this came from as it was not mentioned in the results of the study.

Mentoring was an important part of the programme but there was little analysis of the impact of the mentoring in the study.

Out of the Box Festival of Early Childhood (OOTB), Tayler et al (2006)

Maryland Scale 1, methodologically weak

Based in Australia, the festival was a public event designed to enrich the creative and cultural lives of children aged 3-8 years, their parents and their communities. The programme in 2004 presented 28 different arts experiences for children ranging from performance to visual art over a 6 day period.

In relation to families' experi-

ences and perceptions, parents stated that there were three main reasons for attending – a fun day out, exposure to the arts and learning opportunities. Parents also indicated that the event was family friendly.

The researchers found that the programme offered parents the opportunity for non-directive learning (watching together,

playing, dancing, singing, clapping) and directive learning (discussing, reading stories, assisting with hands on activities).

Parents reported that their children had learned new things. However, the research did not explore how many parents engaged in learning opportunities with their children and the impact this had on the family.

“THE IDEA OF

FAMILIES TOGETHER

ENJOYING THE ARTS,

WAS GIVEN

SUBSTANTIAL

ENDORSEMENT BY

FAMILY MEMBERS.”

Tayler et al (2006)

Arts projects in PRUs and LSUs, Wilkin, Gulliver and Kinder (2005)

Maryland Scale 1, methodologically weak

Based in the UK, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation commissioned research into the effects and effectiveness of arts projects in Pupil Referral Units (PRU) and Learning Support Units (LSU).

The aim of the research was to look in particular at any distinctive contribution that arts activities might make to pupils' edu-

cational, social and personal development.

The majority of pupils said their knowledge of the arts form increased and the programme provided them with new or enhanced skills and techniques. Teachers and pupils said the programmes had an impact on their personal development, in particular in relation to confi-

dence and self-esteem. The majority of pupils felt that being involved in the programmes had had a positive impact on their behaviour.

The majority of outcomes in the research are based on self reported responses from pupils, teachers and artists. As a result, they need to be viewed with a degree of caution.

THIS STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

THE CONTRIBUTION

ARTS PROJECTS CAN

MAKE TO INDIVIDUAL

PUPILS' EDUCATIONAL,

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL

DEVELOPMENT”

Wilkin, Gulliver and

Kinder (2005)

Involving marginalised groups and families

A number of the studies discussed how they had attempted to reach marginalised groups and measures they put in place to maintain the involvement of marginalised students in arts programmes. A number of themes have been raised in the research.

Involving mentors: There was some evidence to support the involvement of mentors in arts programmes with marginalised students and it is an area that is worth exploring in more detail. In one study, the arts programme looked at the impact of the artists and their relationship with the students (Buys and Miller, 2009). They found that an environment of trust was created between the children and the artist with a move away from traditional instructor-student relationships. In the Arts Council England (2006) study, an important part of the programme was the support and active involvement of three of the young

people's key workers. The involvement of the key workers was seen as an essential part of working with hard-to-reach young people. Although different in their approach, the REA showed that the training of artists and key workers impacted on reaching marginalised students.

Involving parents: There was some evidence of the importance of parental involvement in the success of arts programmes on children. Bilhartz, Bruhn and Olson (1999) studied an arts programme with direct parent /guardian involvement in the programme. They found that levels of parental involvement had an effect on the cognitive and musical development of the young children. They also found that the level of parental participation differed between the income groups with parents in low-income families participating less than parents in middle and high income. The

REA demonstrates that thought needs to be given to the expected levels of parental involvement and to adjust programmes accordingly to encourage participation and ongoing attendance for marginalised students.

Transport and facilities: The REA highlighted that while the content of the programmes are important when targeting marginalised groups, thought needs to be given to transport, refreshments and facilities. Two of the studies involved programmes with different approaches to transport. Betts (2006) required high parent involvement with parents providing transport which was not successful. Wright, John, Alaggia and Sheel (2006) found that sustained participation reported by parents was because of free transportation and snacks, a place to go to after school, the high quality of the programmes as well as good project staff were important.

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Rapid evidence assessment methodology

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) carried out a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) to assess the social impact of art learning programmes. A REA is based on the principles of a systematic review. The REA question aimed to assess the impact of art learning programmes on marginalised groups and families.

The REA search was limited to the papers included in the Cultural and Sport Evidence Programme

(CASE, 2010)) database of research on culture and sport engagement. The CASE database contains research on culture and sport engagement. In total, 268 abstracts were selected from the CASE database search. Following on from the abstract sift, 36 papers were identified and called for. Seven papers were not available in the timescale. The 29 papers were reviewed and assessed for inclusion in the REA and at this stage, 15 were excluded as with further

reading, it was felt that they did not meet the criteria.

In total, 14 papers were involved in the detailed assessment. The studies were based across five countries – USA, UK, Australia, Canada and South Africa.

It should be noted that ten out of the fourteen studies were coded as being methodologically weak studies. This means some of the results should be viewed with a degree of caution.