

# Creative & Credible

## REPORTING AND DISSEMINATION

Written by Norma Daykin with Meg Attwood and the Creative and Credible Project Team.

It is important that evaluation findings are recorded so that they can be shared with project participants, stakeholders, funders and commissioners. Most projects result in an evaluation report that serves to document the project, highlight the findings of the evaluation and share any learning from the project.

It is useful for a project report, even if it is brief, to document each stage in the evaluation cycle and describe the findings of the evaluation. Some of the questions to consider at this stage are:

1. What impact did the project have?
2. What were the strengths and weaknesses of its delivery?
3. What learning can be captured in order to inform future projects and the wider arts and health community?

Evaluation reports should not focus purely on the strengths and benefits to participants identified by the evaluation, but should also capture the challenges and the learning identified. Care must be taken to present a balanced account of the project – presenting a range of views/perspectives and including successes as well as challenges, limitations and recommendations for future projects. For example, when reporting qualitative data, it is not good practice to simply select the quotes from participants that show project in a positive light. It is important to highlight quotes that show how changes could be made to improve the project in future. By presenting a more balanced view evaluators can improve the quality of the evidence as well as increase the credibility of the project and its evaluation.

A typical evaluation report may include the following sections:

- Introduction
- Project description
- Project aims and evaluation aims/questions
- Evaluation methodology
- Evaluation findings
- Discussion
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Appendices

The report can be populated with images that illustrate the

project and the evaluation activity that was carried out. These will help to make the report more visually appealing and engaging to readers. It is important to make sure that valid consent and the relevant permissions have been obtained before using photographs and artworks in reports.

### 'Grey Literature' versus Academic Publishing

Most arts and health project evaluations take the form of unpublished reports, or 'grey literature'. They are often intended for specific local audiences, and may even be confidential, although in some cases they can be made more widely available through organisations' websites. Nevertheless, there are barriers to disseminating project evaluation more widely. Unlike journal publications, grey literature is not generally subject to peer review, which means that there is not independent scrutiny of the quality of the evaluation or the reliability of its findings. Grey literature often does not appear in search engines, limiting the wider impact of project evaluations.

Academic and scientific literature is not readily accessible to arts and health practitioners. However, there are powerful advantages of publishing evaluation findings in academic or scientific journals. These include making the information available to a wider, often international audiences as well as contributing to the broader evidence base. It is worth bearing in mind that the majority of peer review journals will not publish studies that have not been through an independent ethics review process. The initial assessment of whether a project constitutes evaluation or research therefore has long term implications on the ability to disseminate knowledge in the public domain.

In the last few years, a number of academic journals have been established to publish arts and health research. These include:

Arts and Health, an International Journal of Research, Policy and Practice.

Published by Taylor and Francis, this journal includes empirical research, policy analysis, theory and practice on arts and health, wellbeing, social inclusion and healthcare practice across a range of settings.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rahe20/current>

The Journal of Applied Arts & Health

Published by Intellect Books, this journal serves a wide community of artists, researchers, practitioners and policy makers, publishing research and scholarship including evidence and reflective practice.

<http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Journal,id=169/>



University of the  
West of England

Creative and Credible is a knowledge exchange project between the University of West of England and Willis Newson, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.  
[www.creativeandcredible.co.uk](http://www.creativeandcredible.co.uk)