

DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR LIVE MUSIC NOW & THE NHS IMPROVING ME PARTNERSHIP

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Workshop Discussion

The *Institute of Cultural Capital* (ICC) is working with *Live Music Now* (LMN) and the NHS *Improving Me* Cheshire and Merseyside Women's and Children's Services Partnership, to develop an evaluation framework to explore the impact and value of their creative work with women and young families, focused in the first instance on the *Lullaby* programme. Adapted from an original project led by *Carnegie Hall in New York*, *Lullaby* brings pregnant women and new mothers together with professional artists to write and sing personal lullabies for their babies, supporting maternal health, aiding childhood development, and strengthening the bond between parent and child.

On 27th May 2021, the research team held a stakeholder engagement workshop (online focus group) to consult on the evaluation framework in the early stages of its development. This helps to ensure that evaluation research:

- Captures value and impact from multiple perspectives:
 - As a **formative process**, sharing learning about the *practice* of creative work in health and social care as a professional peer group;
 - Investigating a **continuum of health and social care outcomes** for women and families (e.g. personal development; subjective wellbeing; mental and physical health);
 - At a macro level, longer-term community-level outcomes for health and social care services and their **cumulative social value**.
- Contributes to regional and national conversations and policy agendas:
 - Too many evaluation studies exist in isolation and are under-utilised;
 - Aiming to support regional, **asset-based health promotion agendas**, including social prescribing;
 - Adding value to national conversations and evidence base on **creative health**.

Academics and professional practitioners working in the fields of music education, health psychology, midwifery, health inequalities and mental health joined us for a fruitful discussion, covering the following key evaluation concepts and practices:

Defining the outcomes	Understanding the process	Evidencing the outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the key outcomes of the Lullaby project you (or your organisation) aim to achieve.• Where possible, think about <i>short and longer-term, expected and desirable</i> outcomes.• As a group, we will discuss emerging similarities (e.g. agreed outcomes) and priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the Lullaby project activities that you and your organisation deliver and/or support.• Discuss how these connect with expected and desired outcomes.• Identify any other resources and environmental factors required for outcomes to be achieved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the data that you currently (or can easily) collect and what activities these may relate to.• Review and discuss the efficacy of available data and outputs.• Identify any gaps and the types of evidence (data) required to connect activities and expected/desired outcomes.

Figure 1 – Stakeholder workshop agenda

Defining the outcomes

Colleagues acknowledged a simultaneous need for a standardised evaluation approach that considers consistent outcomes across all *Lullaby* programme(s), and for an approach that is responsive to individual participants' circumstances, own personal objectives and desired outcomes when taking part.

Concerning consistent outcomes across all *Lullaby* programmes, colleagues recognised the potential for a 'hierarchy of impacts', including primary and secondary indicators. The following short and longer-term outcomes were identified and discussed:

Shorter term

Impact on the subjective wellbeing of participating women and families, with recommended use of the PERMA scale developed by Martin Seligman¹. This reliable, validated measure has already formed the basis of research on the wellbeing impacts of the *Lullaby* programme in New York².

Equally, evaluation research should consider the wellbeing-related impacts on participating professionals, including for example LMN musicians and collaborating health and social care workers. In addition to PERMA indicators, these may include outcomes relating to wellbeing in the workplace, including job satisfaction.

Social connectedness is an important element to explore in fostering personal agency and wellbeing, this includes with professional musicians and associated staff, within own family and friend networks and within and across different community infrastructures.

Linked to this, it would be beneficial to appraise levels of trust in public services and institutions, and the formal systems designed to support participating women, as the programme progresses.

There is also interest in exploring the subsequent impact of the programme on women's agency – that being feelings and actions of enhanced choice and control in their lives. There needs to be a distinction made here between self-reported statements (short-term impact) and actual behavioural changes (e.g. actively seeking help, or changes in use of statutory health and social care services and other support providers; educational and employment opportunities). Short-term measures of behaviour change could include levels of engagement with the programme itself (e.g. attendance and retention rates).

Longer term

Longer-term, it would be interesting to track developmental outcomes (individual and maternal) for both participating women and their babies and young children. This requires a longitudinal approach starting with experiences of pregnancy and labour, and includes language and communication skills, literacy skills and formal educational outcomes.

There are a number of macro-level considerations regarding professional infrastructures and networks, including for example:

¹ Based on 5 principles of wellbeing including Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment: <https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/perma wellbeing.pdf>

² <https://www.carnegiehall.org/Education/Programs/Lullaby-Project#research>

- Impact on women’s longer-term engagement with public services and institutions (following on from the ‘agency’ discussion).
- It is also important to consider the longer-term impact on participating professional’s career development and progression, further to short-term indicators highlighted above (e.g. job satisfaction; wellbeing in the workplace). This includes retention of participating health and social care staff in the clinical workforce.
- Linked to this, there is an interest in exploring the value of *Lullaby* and related creative interventions in the formal training of medical students and allied health professionals, particularly with regards to interpersonal and communication skills.

The longer-term value of *Lullaby* as an integrated creative intervention in women’s health and social care also needs to be evidenced and communicated in terms of its cost-benefit to NHS commissioners. Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis³ was suggested as an appropriate means of assessing short and longer-term (projected) economic impact, due to its emphasis on social outcomes and value.

Research recommendations

Engage a sample of participating women to act as peer evaluators/researchers, effectively becoming part of the research team as auto-ethnographers in the co-creation of a series of **case studies**. This would enable peer researchers to identify their own personal objectives and outcomes, as per advice from stakeholder colleagues, and narrate their own experience of the programme and subjective impact upon them and their families, with the support of the research team. This in itself would act as a vehicle for enhanced self-efficacy and agency for participating women, and ensure that the evaluation is an embedded part of the programme in a participatory action research capacity (described in more detail below).

This will complement other more conventional qualitative research methods and standardised quantitative data on wellbeing and agency. For the latter, reliable measures of general and parental **self-efficacy** are recommended, which can be combined in one survey questionnaire with PERMA scales to be administered at regular intervals throughout the programme.

Understanding the process

Colleagues emphasised the need to understand how the specific mechanisms of the programme contribute to its outcomes and enable it to make a difference, and that this will be context-specific, depending for example on where women are in their maternal journeys and any relative needs they may have. Realistic Evaluation provides useful guiding principles for research on the *Lullaby* programme, as it is driven by a desire for greater validity and utility of evaluation findings, via outcomes that are deeply rooted in the contexts and

³ SROI analysis combines methodologically rigorous qualitative indicators of social value and financial proxy measures, to illustrate the economic cost benefit of cultural activities for commissioners and cross-sector stakeholders. The [Public Services \(Social Value\) Act 2013](#) legally requires public bodies to consider how the services they commission and procure might improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area. Understanding the social value created by public and voluntary services helps to ensure that services are delivering not only value for money, but that the impact of this work extends beyond the activity or programme being delivered.

mechanisms of the programme under investigation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). This approach encourages researchers and programme stakeholders to consider the social and cultural conditions that are necessary for change mechanisms to operate most effectively, and how they are distributed within and between various programme contexts (Wilson, 2018).

An important 'mechanism' to observe will be the facilitation skills of teaching artists/musicians, as part of the professional practice of delivering the *Lullaby* programme. This includes any learning outcomes related to training and development needs of staff on the programme, which can form part of LMN's organisational development strategy, moving forwards. Observation of professional practice in the *Lullaby* programme should also be mindful of musician and facilitators' own mental health and wellbeing, which is an important factor in supporting cultural and creative professionals working with vulnerable groups or in emotive contexts.

It is important to consider this in the context of other LMN programmes and organisational commitments⁴, including for example diversifying its musician workforce to support work with different community groups. Other contextual factors for LMN as an organisation include its collaborative work with local assets and its approach to digital inclusion when engaged in remote working.

The creative communication and dissemination of the *Lullaby* programme as it progresses will be an important part of capturing and understanding the process. This will be a useful mechanism in advocating the value of the programme to other stakeholders and extended communities of interest and as part of the process to empower participating women to have confidence and pride in their own creative skills and experiences. This includes the use of social media throughout as a communication tool for participants and for reaching wider audiences, and digital media for sharing information on the programme and its creative outputs (e.g. videos).

Research recommendations

Following the principles of Realistic Evaluation, a **participatory action research** (PAR) model should be applied. PAR is distinguishable by its purpose: to influence or change the real-world topic of investigation through a collaborative and cyclical process of action, reflection, and problem-solving (Altricher et al., 2002; Coghlan and Brannick, 2005). It presents an appropriate ontological framework for research on the *Lullaby* programme, through its promotion of a collective commitment to a research challenge; active engagement in self and collective reflection; collective action that leads to a useful solution; and the building of alliances between researchers and collaborators in the planning, implementation and dissemination of the full research process (McIntyre, 2008).

Evidencing the outcomes

As a PAR project, a mixed-method, longitudinal evaluation framework will enable effective triangulation of different data sources to capture identified outcomes as an iterative,

⁴ The *Including Me* programme and work with the Somali community in Liverpool were given as examples: <https://www.livemusicnow.org.uk/lmn-news/title/Including-Me-family-music-programme-launches-on-SocialPrescribing-Day-/item/69885>

formative, creative and participatory process. It is recommended that the following research methods be applied throughout:

- Standardised measure(s) of subjective wellbeing and self-efficacy, to establish (mostly quantitative) baseline data and be administered at mid and end-points of the funded programme. A single survey questionnaire can be designed to include items adapted from the PERMA wellbeing measure and general and parental self-efficacy scales, along with collection of more descriptive data on cohort demographics. Demographic data will help to connect social determinants and health-related outcomes.
- A range of co-designed qualitative methods, practised in an ethnographic capacity by members of the research team, including auto-ethnographers/peer researchers from participating cohorts. Qualitative research should be designed to explore the experience of taking part on a more heuristic basis, complementing and enhancing survey data on subjective wellbeing and self-efficacy with narrative evidence on the specific, attributional qualities of the programme as a creative intervention. This will also help to capture the social dynamics of *Lullaby* as a group experience, along with the impact of the programme on participating individuals.
- Qualitative methods are also appropriate for exploring specific outcomes relating to the professional practice and development of participating musicians and the organisational development of LMN.
- Qualitative data may include for example:
 - field notes, including participant observation notes of programme sessions and auto-ethnographic reflective journals/video diaries;
 - Interviews with peer researchers, reflecting on auto-ethnographic data, conducted at start, mid and end points of the programme;
 - case studies developed from auto-ethnographic/peer researcher interview data;
 - interviews with the professional community of practice, including a snowball sample of musicians, LMN support staff and collaborating organisations, also conducted at start, mid and end points of the programme;
 - sentiment analysis of social media content and engagement with digital media and creative outputs.
- SROI analysis, which includes identification of recurring indicators of social value from data collected throughout the evaluation, which are then reviewed, refined and grouped thematically during a stakeholder workshop towards the end of the programme. The total cost of the programme is then compared to financial proxies relating to interventions that would expect to have similar outcomes, to show that for every £1 invested in the programme, £x amount of social value is generated immediately and over a projected period (e.g. up to five years after the programme).

Research recommendations

This creates a manageable, three-tier evaluation framework, summarised below in figure 2, focused primarily on **shorter-term** research outcomes and that is both consistent with and enhances the existing evidence base on *Lullaby* as a reputable, international creative intervention. This furthermore represents a robust, replicable or adaptable programme evaluation model, which can be easily applied across a range of LMN activities.

Empirical research on **longer-term** outcomes, including for example those relating to behavioural changes in use of and engagement with health and social care services, would require substantial resourcing (e.g. research council grant) for a collaborative programme of longitudinal research, which includes situated partners in educational, health innovation and social care settings and adopts a detailed case study approach. The framework described below could be adapted appropriately, supported by additional reference to secondary data sources (e.g. population health data; regional demographics). A longer-term empirical research project would also help to substantiate the contribution of the *Lullaby* programme to the existing knowledge base by situating the study in the historical context of musical interventions in health and social care.

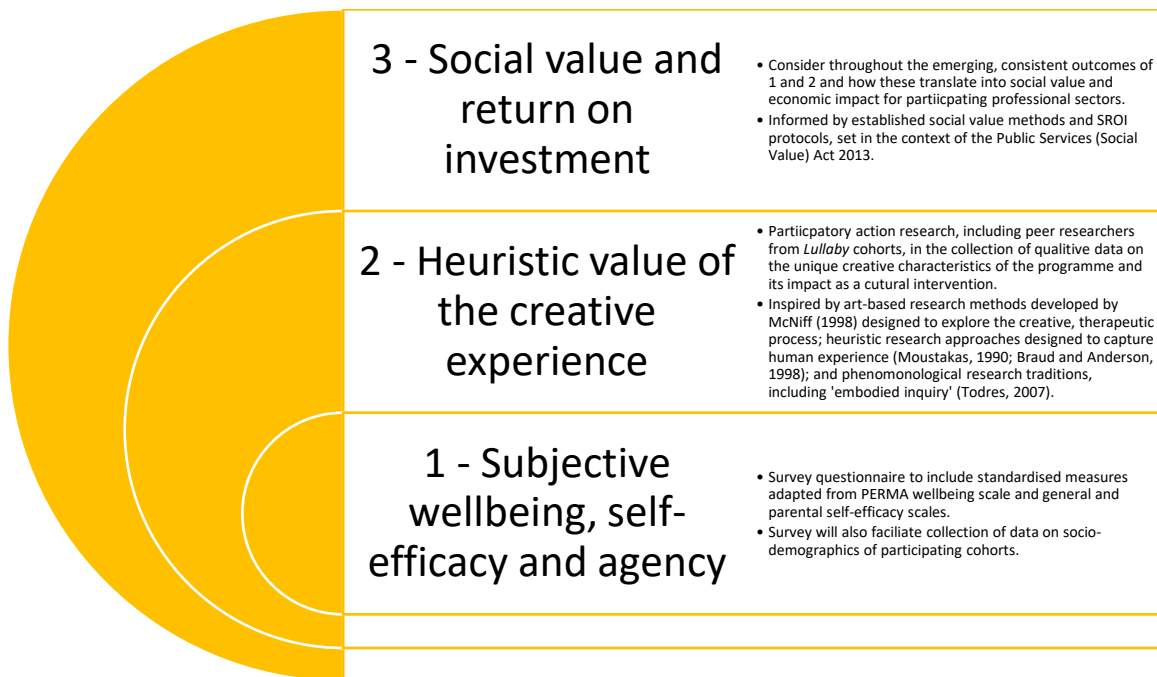


Figure 2 – Three-tier evaluation framework

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