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Seeing the Difference:

Measuring the Impact of Small Community Organisations

Report for Goldsmiths, University of London and Voluntary Action Islington

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Introduction

'Impact measurement' is a term heard increasingly from community sector organisations and funders, usually as part of debates about how to ensure effective, evidence-based practice and value for money. As such, it is often seen as part of a move to import formal, bureaucratic processes from the private and public sectors, into the community sector. However, as this report shows, there are many ways in which community organisations already identify how they make a difference through their activities, though this might not always be labelled 'impact'. This research report suggests that community organisations and their funders may find they can collect more valuable information about the difference they make by thinking flexibly about 'impact', beyond 'step-by-step' formalised guidance.

This report is the result of a research project conducted by Goldsmiths College, in close collaboration with Voluntary Action Islington. Building on a previous project within the Taking Part Programme, we set out to investigate how small community organisations might measure their impact, emphasising a practical approach to the actual *doing* of measurement, rather than setting out a prescriptive framework. This was an action research project, engaging with representatives of six small organisations who were trying to get to grips with how to measure their impact. By working with them to try to understand and apply the various frameworks and guidance that we had collected from elsewhere and produced ourselves, we could see the difficulties of existing frameworks as well as the tools they offer to help organisations to understand and explain the difference they make.

As a result, this report does not attempt to produce another step-by-step toolkit for measuring impact. The appendix lists a number of such references which are already available. It did not seem helpful to reproduce a slightly different version of the same kind of tool, given the experiences of trying to apply the tool that were found through this research. Instead, the report presents an account of the findings of the research, demonstrating the difficulties of applying existing frameworks in the real context of small community organisations' work. It shows specific challenges, but also how the groups involved in the project overcame them. It is hoped that these accounts of real experiences will be helpful to other similar organisations, in thinking about what their specific challenges might be, and how they could deal with them in order to reach a useful understanding of their impact.

The report draws out some broader conceptual issues about impact measurement, which apply particularly to the small community organisations discussed here, but are also more widely relevant. The findings of the research suggest that for 'impact' as a concept to add value to the

existing set of tools and terms for measuring and managing performance, it is necessary to take a step back from simple formulas, and to begin from accounts of real and wide-ranging experiences and evidence of how activities make a difference in the world (on very small as well as large scales). So the report suggests a way of looking at impact that is about starting from the real experiences of community organisations and those they work with, and finding ways to understand and communicate these internally and externally.

Discussions with funding organisations suggest that the people who ask small organisations to measure and demonstrate their impact also recognise many of the challenges this presents. In theory at least, they are open to more imaginative ways of capturing the real differences made by community work. However, the scope for engaging with a less formulaic approach can be limited by the need for large funders to be accountable for their spending in standard ways. The recommendations section of the report suggests some ways that small organisations and their funders could develop more imaginative and effective ways of understanding impact, within these constraints.

The report begins with a brief explanation of the research that was carried out for this project. The main report is then structured around three central research questions:
1) what is impact?
2) why measure the impact of small community organisations?
3) how can small community organisations measure their impact?
Within each of these sections, there is a discussion of existing work in this area, and a reflection on the findings from the empirical research for the project. The report concludes with a summary of findings and recommendations based on the research.

Carrying out the research

This action research project is part of a bigger programme, called 'Taking Part', which is intended to build research capacity in the voluntary and community sector through partnership with academic institutions. For this particular project, the Department for Professional and Community Education at Goldsmiths, University of London partnered with Voluntary Action Islington to work directly with small organisations to understand how they measure their 'impact', and what tools might help similar organisations to do this.

Before starting the project, researchers at Goldsmiths approached a number of small organisations to be partners in the project. Though they were all interested, they were unable to commit the time that would be necessary to be the main partner in the project. This in itself is indicative of the difficulties small community organisations have in finding time and resources to dedicate to issues like impact measurement, when they are hard-pressed to complete their core activities and secure funds to continue their work.

Working with Voluntary Action Islington (VAI) was an excellent solution, however. As an umbrella organisation for the voluntary sector in Islington, their role is to provide the infrastructure to support the sector as a whole. Thus the value they add by being able to take part in work like this can benefit local community organisations with less investment from each organisation individually. As luck would have it, VAI had already been planning a series of workshops for small organisations interested in developing their impact measurement, as part of a programme funded by Trust for London and carried out between 2006 and 2012. We agreed that the researcher would be involved in these sessions, enabling an action research approach to understanding how small community organisations can measure their impact.

Who was involved

As noted above, the researcher for the project was based at Goldsmiths and worked alongside the Head of Research at VAI, developing ideas together both within and outside the workshop sessions. Representatives of seven small groups took part in some or all of the workshops, and full details of the names and scopes of these organisations are given in Appendix Two. All of the workshop participants made important contributions to the findings of this research, through their own insights, reflections and learning about the process of impact measurement. After the workshops were completed, the researcher used the emerging findings as the basis of interviews with three major funders of local community groups, to consider their reactions to the challenges and ideas that had emerged from the first part of the research. Their details are

also given in Appendix Two. The idea of speaking to funders as well as small organisations was one raised independently by the research team at Goldsmiths, by VAI, and by the participants from small organisations themselves.

How the process worked

This project was overtly action research, learning from the process of 'doing'. In helping to plan and facilitate workshops on impact measurement, the researcher became familiar with existing literature on impact measurement – not just as a body of work, but as tools in practice. Being involved in the process of learning with community organisations meant giving them information on impact measurement, but also learning from them about their needs, wants and expectations from the process – and the practicalities of understanding and measuring impact for their organisations. The reflections in this report are all related to specific questions that arose in the process of trying to understand impact measurement in the real world of small community organisations.

There were five workshop sessions of two hours, spread over several weeks. Each workshop was an intense session including short presentations from the facilitators, bursts of individual and group discussion and brainstorming, and one to one discussions between facilitators and participants. Each week was focused on achieving a specific task, and the programme was planned in advance but adapted in response to the interests, needs and progress within previous sessions. Outside of the sessions, the facilitators developed presentations, tools and discussion ideas to help to move the learning along; and participants from small organisations were asked to do 'homework', such as gathering information or reflecting on particular issues, to bring to the following session. The researcher informed the group about her role at the beginning of the workshops and throughout the process, and asked permission to use her participation in the workshops in this research. Participants were aware that they could withdraw their consent to participate, or to be named or have specific examples from their organisation mentioned in the research report, at any time.

Though not all of the same participants were able or chose to attend all of the workshops, there was a core, regular attendance from most of the groups. The nature of the different needs within the sector were reflected, for example, by the fact that one group (Praxis) attended due to their involvement in a previous Take Part research project linked to this one, but found their interests evolving in a different way and decided only to attend two sessions. Another group (Minority Matters) attended three of the sessions, but it emerged that their main need was for support in completing an annual report, support they then received from VAI outside of the

workshops. Another regular participant left before the final session because she had been attending as a volunteer but had since found paid work which conflicted with the timing of the workshops. These changing patterns of participation reflected the need for support and resources for small organisations to be flexible and responsive.

What is impact?

It is important to be clear at the outset that there are two ways to answer the question 'what is impact?'.

Firstly, there is 'impact' as a real thing, most simply this is *the difference made by an organisation* – everything that happens because the organisation exists (and which might not happen if it didn't exist).

Secondly, 'impact' is a set of ideas – a trend, or jargon – in the world of evaluation and measurement. In this sense, 'impact' might not necessarily be just about understanding the difference an organisation makes; it is also about presenting this in a way that is acceptable to others concerned with 'impact measurement' as a set of conventions.

Though these senses of 'impact' are not unconnected, they can mean different things for measurement. This is most important when measuring and accounting for impact in order to meet the requirements of external funding bodies, when there will be specific pressures a) to demonstrate 'good' impacts b) to report impact in a way that fits with the frameworks of the funding bodies. Interestingly, these dual understandings were also borne out in the interviews with people working for funding organisations.

So part of the process of understanding how small organisations do and can measure impact is to recognize that they do it for different purposes at different times, and this might require different procedures and types of information.

What are the lessons from existing research?

Collis et al (2003) give some key findings from their detailed case study research on measuring impact for small and medium-sized voluntary organisations. They suggest that in measuring impact, there are three key things to bear in mind: be realistic; make use of existing tools; and ensure that measurement is fit for purpose for the specific needs of the organisation and its aims. Alongside these arguments for simplicity and flexibility, they suggest that using a mixture of measurement approaches, building indicators that can be measured quantitatively (as these often have greater weight with funders) from information gathered qualitatively (e.g. through interviews and involvement with users and stakeholders), and using a system-based approach to understand what information and impacts are of most relevance to different people and organisations.

International research on non-profit organisations' impact measurement (Salamon et al, 2000) provides broadly similar conclusions – it is hard to develop a one-size-fits-all measurement tool, but there is a need to:

- look beyond outputs

- be systematic, both about choosing which impacts to measure, and in collecting information

- look at negative as well as positive impacts

Salamon and his colleagues also suggest that there should be an element of comparison with other types of organisation (such as public or private sector services) and across other (national) contexts. These last conclusions from Salamon's study may be less relevant to the work of small local organisations.

Research on small third sector organisations suggests that measuring impact is a challenge because a) resources are limited, b) their most important impacts may be hard to measure in economic terms, or may take a long time to become apparent, or it may be inappropriate to measure them in economic terms, but c) they increasingly feel the need to demonstrate impacts they do have, to retain ongoing support (McCabe, 2011; Phillimore et al, 2010). Gill et al (2011) point out that for such small organisations, decisions need to be made about the level and detail of impact measurement that is useful, desirable and required. They suggest it may be more useful to 'research the "role" of very small community organisations – in order to establish the extent to which it is important that they remain on the "map" given their characteristics and role in encouraging community cohesion and participation – even if economic impact cannot be measured' (p.71).

Likewise, Arvidson (2009) argues that attention needs to be paid to *how* impact measurement information will be used. He draws attention to another element of this relationship (beyond communicating with funders) by pointing to the power relationships involved when organisations (even small organisations) collect data about their users – particularly where the users may be, by definition, vulnerable. Involving users and other stakeholders in measuring impact is thus an ethical challenge, not just in giving them a say in what factors are recognised as important impacts, but in providing a level of informed involvement in the shaping of services.

While much data-gathering for impact assessment relies on surveys, interviews, questionnaire or focus groups, there are additional ways of collecting data, which could be considered (they

may all have advantages – such as more detailed information – and disadvantages – such as time and resources needed, and raise different ethical dilemmas). Hall Aitken (2008) suggest journals and diaries, videos, or collection of views through text messages. They strongly recommend triangulating data by collecting more than one type of information, for example, self-assessment of outcomes and impact by clients, and information on the views of others about how clients' lives have been changed; or linking measures of 'soft' (intangible) outcomes (such as increased communication skills and engagement of young offenders) and impacts to 'hard' ones (such as percentage changes in arrest rates in the local area). It is important to recognise that indicators are being used for a purpose, and may have to be the closest possible *indicator* of an impact, rather than the definitive measure (which may not be possible to achieve): 'Once you realise (and convince other stakeholders) that the goal is *plausible indicators* of progress you can begin to search for or develop your own' (Hall Aitken, 2008:3).

There are clear lessons about the need for impact measurement in the third sector to be both systematic and flexible. Alongside this, several studies point out that there is a need for clarity about what impacts are being measured and why. If small organisations need to measure particular impacts in a particular way to impress funders, they should do so with an awareness about the extent to which they want this to inform their overall organisational outlook (see for instance Arvidson, 2010; Lyon, 2009) as well as what opportunities such decisions can present (Arvidson and Lyon, 2011).

Arguing back – the Institute of Development Studies

In 2010, the Institute of Development Studies instituted a campaign they called 'The Big Push Back', which aimed to counter the growing audit culture among government funders and philanthropic foundations who were seen to be making increasingly detailed and unrealistic demands for data on the international development charities they funded. The IDS campaigners argued that funds were only flowing to those programmes that could demonstrate easily measurable results, leading to a neglect of longer-term or more complex work; and that accountability should focus more on outcomes such as countering poverty or improving social justice, rather than outputs such as numbers of interventions made over a certain period. They argued that the specific demands of funders meant development organisations either had to choose to 'cynically play the game', or to invest a great deal of energy in negotiating with funders about alternative impacts they were making, consuming time, energy and enthusiasm which could have been invested in actual interventions. They were not arguing against accountability, but made recommendations for a more holistic approach to accountability, looking to develop better ways of communicating complex

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messages about working with complex problems, and emphasising accountability to the people for whom international aid exists. Though IDS was working with a different set of concerns to the small organisations involved in this research project, this campaign chimes with the findings here about the difference between measuring impact – and being seen to play the impact measurement game.

Definitions from toolkits

Guidance on how to measure impact tends to start from the simple definition of 'real impact' – changes that happen as a result of an activity, which would not have happened otherwise. They present a range of ways for conceptualising impact, for instance:

1. Differentiating impact from inputs, outputs and outcomes

2. Specifying impact on different aspects of life (political, economic, etc)

3. Specifying direct and indirect impacts

4. Reminding users to think of negative as well as positive impacts

5. Reminding users to think of unintended, as well as intended, impacts

We adapted many of these tools (in particular those from NCVO and nef – see Appendix One) for use in the workshops. For example:

Table 1: Definitions. Table taken from NCVO (no date).	
Term	*Definition*
Inputs	Resources that contribute to a programme or activity, including income, staff, volunteers and equipment
Activities	What an organisation does with its inputs in order to achieve its mission. They could be training, counselling or advice
Outputs	Countable units; they are the direct products of a programme or organisation's activities. They could be classes taught, training courses delivered or people

	attending workshops. In themselves they are not the objectives of the organisation.
Outcomes	The benefits or changes for intended beneficiaries. They tend to be less tangible and therefore less countable than outputs. Outcomes are usually planned and are therefore set out in an organisation's objectives. Outcomes may be causally and linearly related; that is, one outcome leads to another, which leads to another and so on, forming a linear sequence of if-then relationships.
Impact	**All changes resulting from an activity, project, or organisation. It includes intended as well as unintended effects, negative as well as positive, and long-term as well as short-term.**

Other explanatory tools for thinking about impact that are available include:

Social Return on Investment (SROI) and Cost-Benefit Analysis SROI is a methodology designed to understand the impact of work done by third sector organisations in terms of monetary value. SROI converts social benefits into monetary measures by, for example, estimating how much would be saved to the NHS not having to treat someone for depression, because they had been engaged in the community and developed social networks and other protective factors through being part of a social group organised by their housing provider. More sophisticated developments of SROI also attempt to account for discounted cash benefits over time, using techniques from more standard accounting methods. For detailed practical advice on using SROI methods for measuring impact, see Nicholls et al, 2009.

Criticisms of SROI are that its use of economic and accounting methods can hide the fact that it still relies on discretion and judgement in setting indicators; that quantifying social impacts in terms of cash value can be seen as inappropriate; that it requires some element of expertise that not all organisations can access easily; and that it can tend to remain focused on measuring the impacts on services, staff and volunteers rather than on less easily measured impacts (Arvidson et al, 2010).

NCVO Full Value The National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) has developed substantial research and guidance on measuring impact (see 'other resources' below). Their guidance uses the term 'full value' to describe the impact third sector organisations can have through their services and projects, covering outcomes (actual changes that have taken place) and satisfaction (how pleased people are with the services and projects); and dividing this again

between primary impacts (on those for whom the service or project is designed) and secondary impacts (on anyone else – for example, staff, volunteers, relatives or neighbours of the primary users, or other organisations in the area) (Eliot and Piper, 2008). NCVO guidance also encourages readers to quantify their impact in terms of graphs or charts which show the relative 'size' of different types of impact. Though not as detailed or technical as the SROI methodology, this can have the same benefits and risks in that it can be more convincing to readers to see a mathematical chart of impact, but can mask the fact that these numbers are based on estimates and comparisons, rather than 'counting'.

Community Matters Your Value Tool This tool is aimed at smaller community organisations, and so tries to limit the amounts of additional data collection that may be required. It focuses on prompting structured reflection, and requires a 'critical friend' who is familiar with the organisation to provide challenge and support for the organisation's own self-assessment of impact. Like many other guidance tools listed here, the Your Value! guidance aims at planning or estimated likely impact of an organisation, by considering factors such as the extent to which the organisation works with diverse groups, or considers its environmental footprint. Its definition of impact appears to be about likely long-term outcomes of the organisation's work.

Narratives and qualitative presentation of impact Some models of impact measurement link qualitative and quantitative aspects. One example is the nef Prove It! model (Walker et al, 2000), which begins with a storyboarding and impact mapping exercise. This exercise encourages groups to develop a conversation about who their work affects, how it affects them, and how they can know about these impacts. This is then used to shape a survey, to gather quantitative as well as qualitative measures, and finally there is a chance for groups to reflect and interpret the meaning of the survey measurements in light of their initial storyboard.

Case studies Much has been done which measures impact on economy based on outputs such as numbers of volunteers, calculating a nominal hourly rate thus their contribution to the economy, jobs and spending within the voluntary and community sector – but not broader impact (see Lewis, 2001 and research reviewed therein).

Similarly, impact of members of an umbrella body (the vcs in Camden) focused on money invested, and the equivalent financial cost of volunteers' time, but did not go beyond this even for example to relatively quantifiable measurements such as potential savings to the NHS by interventions of VCS groups, or beyond this to less tangible benefits (Johnston, 2011).

Impact evaluation of grant schemes often focus on anecdotal evidence of changing feel (from practitioners – e.g. Annabel Jackson Associates, 2000) or output evidence (e.g. requests for information, increased membership of organisations). Many such studies conclude by acknowledging the limits of this type of evidence for understanding wider and longer-term impact, and recommend further exploration of this in future (e.g. Chauhan, 2009).

Client journeys A number of 'outcome tools' are designed for different purposes – e.g. there is a set of various tools aimed at individual client 'journeys', others at the impact on a client group as a whole. MacKeith and Graham (2010) provide a useful guide to such tools for the homelessness sector. Note that these are *outcome* tools, rather than *impact* tools, that is, they focus on changes for the client group rather than wider changes. However, the idea of mapping 'journeys' of clients (for example, as they become more confident, gain skills, and begin to access more permanent housing) could potentially be developed as a way of thinking about different types of impacts on a the wider community that are felt at each stage of a 'client journey'.

Impact planning CLG produced a toolkit (Broadwood and Sugden, 2008) for assessing impact of initiatives on community cohesion, this is clearly written and takes users through stages including relevant background data they might wish to collect, but a) it is mainly aimed at local authorities, b) it mainly consists of detailed/vague questions without clear guidance about how the person using it is intended to answer them (e.g. 'will this activity increase inequalities between the different groups' p15) and c) it is about planning/anticipating impact before an initiative, rather than measuring impact of something that has been done.

Definition for this research – and separating impact measurement from performance management

At the beginning of planning the workshop, as facilitators we began by thinking about specific areas we would need to cover to make the workshops meaningful and useful. These could be broken into three types of information:

1) Broader conceptual issues – the values inherent in thinking in terms of impact, and the viewpoints that can be assumed (e.g. what is a positive impact for some could be negative for others); thinking through the ethical implications of impact, both philosophical and practical; power relations in the process of impact measurement.

2) Specifics of impact measurement – understanding the jargon; the difference between impact, outcomes, etc; tools for conceptualising impact (such as 'outcomes wheel' - see

below); change over time, or before and after interventions; forms for understanding and reporting impact; etc).

3) Practical methodologies – general research methods, and evaluation methods; working with data; understanding different types of data, and what can be said about them; identifying existing available data within and outside the organisation; gathering original data; presenting research/evaluation findings.

The first sessions made it clear that even the tools that were designed to be most user-friendly could be baffling when organisations attempted to think of them in terms of their real work. This was particularly the case when the size of the organisations taking part meant noticing an impact of their work on population-level data was unrealistic. As an aid to understanding, we tried to produce examples of definitions of specific impacts (in which organisations had expressed an impact) and potential indicators. These resources are included in Appendix Four.

However, our process of co-investigation in the workshops engaged with both of the meanings of 'impact' outlined at the opening to this section of the report. Firstly, organisations were concerned to know how they were making a difference, and what difference. But secondly, they were also prompted to find out because they are increasingly being required to account for their 'impact', particularly when seeking funding from a range of other organisations. So an important element of learning from the workshops, for all involved, was about how to balance finding the best ways to understand the changes being made by an organisation or activity – with demonstrating this within the rules of the game of impact measurement.

Why measure the impact of small community organisations?

Why measure impact?

Organisations are increasingly being encouraged to measure their impact, as part of everyday work, rather than an additional activity. Measuring impact is encouraged both to improve internal practice, and to demonstrate value and achievements to funders (e.g. Lumley et al, 2011). However, there are voices within the third sector and evidence from research which urge the importance of individual organisations knowing why they are measuring impact – as it cannot be assumed that more information will be more persuasive to funders, for example (e.g. see Hudson, 2011).

It will not always be useful to measure *all* aspects of impact. Organisations will probably want to identify the differences that they make which are important to measure. The decision to measure impact (or anything else) can increase precision and provide additional information to make decisions about services and projects. However, it is important to recognise that choosing what to measure remains a political and ethical decision in itself. Choosing what to measure (or not measure) is a question of deciding what is important to the people measuring, and using the information (Arvidson, 2009).

What is particular about measuring the impact of small community organisations?

As noted above, there is a growing interest among funders and others in identifying 'impact' of voluntary and community sector activity, in its broadest sense. This is accompanied by a large and growing volume of guidance, toolkits and advice for organisations on how to understand and measure their impact. These tools tend to take similar approaches, setting out processes of conceptualizing and measuring impact in simple steps.

However, both this research and previous work (e.g. Phillimore et al, 2010) found that despite attempts to simplify the process, much of this guidance relies on an idea that there may be full-time paid staff with time to dedicate to performance measurement. For small organisations which rely on volunteers and very few, if any, paid staff, there is often very little time to step away from 'urgent urgent' business of running the central core of the project, or raising money for its ongoing operation – however much taking such time might benefit these urgent tasks in the long run.

Secondly, there may also be little expertise, interest in developing expertise, or interest in working on performance management tasks where the organisation has been set up by volunteers interested in a particular activity or issue, rather than in forming themselves into what is perceived as a more 'business-like' or 'mature', systematized organisation.

Finally, the very core of impact measurement as an idea – that it is a holistic way of thinking about the difference made by an organisation's existence – may be particularly difficult for small organisations, which perhaps only directly intervene in a few people's lives per month or year. While they may make significant impacts on those individuals' lives, and the lives of others who come into contact with them, measuring this impact on any kind of population level which would show up in broader statistics is near to impossible – even as an inference or suggested effect. This latter issue was one that emerged particularly strongly in the process of thinking through impact measurement with small organisations for this research.

One question for the research project was whether we could begin to develop ways of measuring the combined impact of the community sector in an area, or the difference that was made locally by having a strong community sector.

What is a small organisation?

We did not set a formal definition of 'small organisation' in terms of staffing or financial turnover, but the organisations who took part in this project were small in the sense that they relied mainly or solely on volunteers, and they were not of a size to have a dedicated 'performance management' section. These findings should be relevant to organisations of a similar size, but also more widely.

The activities of the organisations involved in this research varied widely – a shelter working with homeless people, a psychotherapeutic community working with child, adolescent and young adult asylum seekers and refugees who have been victims of violence, a music foundation working with disabled people, an organisation tackling food poverty and food waste, a support service for bereaved people, a locally-based national helpline for disabled parents, a supplementary school for Somali young people, and a support service for new and established migrants (see Appendix Three for more details). Thus their impacts were likely to be very different, in terms of visibility, timeliness, geographical reach and interconnection with other influences. Their experience with evaluation frameworks also varied; some of those attending to represent the organisations being volunteers who had worked in other industries; others had worked for their organisation for a long time or a short time, with different levels of

involvement in securing funding from external sources. Yet they shared an interest in understanding impact, and a relatively limited amount of resources to spend on doing so.

Funder perspectives

Though all of the participants in the project were interested in understanding the impact they made for their own organisational purposes, they were also very clear about the importance of being able to communicate the difference they were making to funders. None of the organisations in this project were self-sufficient in terms of funding, and all sought at least some level of financial support from charities or statutory bodies. They had found that most of these bodies have started to ask specific questions about impact, and they were keen to be able to present this successfully. The opportunities to develop imaginative ways of measuring impact thus seemed to be limited by the practicalities of presenting this in a way that would be acceptable and convincing for funders.

An important addition to the participatory workshops was to meet with representatives from a selection of organisations that fund groups such as the workshop participants, in Islington. I met with three institutions – The Cripplegate Foundation, the London Borough of Islington, and the Big Lottery Fund (see Appendix Three for more detail on each of these organisations). With different structures and priorities, this gave an overview of different types of funders and their views, though of course it was by no means a representative sample. The interviews with funder participants were in the style of a conversation, testing out some of the ideas that had emerged during the workshop sessions, describing some of the challenges that small groups had described, and asking funders about how they viewed the process of impact measurement for small organisations.

The key theme that emerged from the interviews with all of the funders was that they had very similar views on the challenges of impact measurement to the small organisations involved in the project. They all said they recognised that it could be difficult to quantify impact in a formulaic way, or to measure a change made by a small organisation in terms of population-level statistics. They all suggested that they were open to hearing the specific stories about the changes that small organisations had made, and which were best represented by stories of particular people's lives or unexpected changes. They did all, of course have different types of funding, amounts of resource they could devote to working with applicants for funding to identify their success, and the amount of accountability they required.

The Cripplegate Foundation, for example, visits all of their funding applicants, to get a sense of their work in practice as well as their written submission. They only work in Islington and

specifically on social justice issues, and with an independent charitable endowment fund. Thus there are a number of ways in which small organisations can explain the difference they make to Cripplegate, and they are much closer to the often very small projects which they fund. The statutory organisations (LBI and Big Lottery Fund) have more detailed frameworks for accountability and reporting which they must meet, as they are dealing with public money (in a time of cuts to public spending) and with larger sums. Yet even here, the people I spoke to were keen to find ways of recognising the less tangible changes that community organisations can make.

At LBI, though there was less capacity to visit all applicants as seen at Cripplegate, the officer described working with organisations to help them to marshal the formal evidence of their effectiveness, where she was convinced of the impact they made which could not necessarily be demonstrated in formulaic terms. Strikingly, she described this as about building relationships with organisations, based on passion, commitment and trust, and giving 'tender loving care' to develop a diversity of approaches.

The Big Lottery Fund has much less capacity to work with all of its funding applicants – though they do make some limited attempts to support capacity building for small organisations, for example through regional and outreach staff. They too described knowing that many organisations 'live in terror' of the impact measurement, evaluation and assessment tools – which was not what they wanted. As a larger, national organisation, there were greater bureaucratic requirements to ensure standard reporting mechanisms – but the Big Lottery Fund recognised that they could do more to make reporting more proportional to the smaller grants. In the middle of a process of developing an impact reporting strategy, the Big Lottery Fund were dealing with many of the same issues about conceptualising impact that have been discussed throughout this report - and had produced their own step-by-step guidance for organisations to help them report on impact. In discussion we talked about impact as a holistic approach to gathering all types of data, where outputs and outcomes might form a part, but not all of the impacts made by a project.

All of the interviewees discussed being aware of more flexible ways of thinking about and reporting impact – indeed, the Big Lottery Fund said that the narrative approach could in some way be more valuable to leaders and politicians than statistics, because of the affective power of a story of change in a person's life. However, they all admitted that organisations would have to present these more imaginative forms of understanding impact alongside, or within, more formal bureaucratic forms of measurement – they had not yet found a way to capture

consistently the kinds of information that would show the kinds of impact in which they were interested.

How can small community organisations measure their impact?

Questions of expertise and 'learning the rules'

Interviewees at the Big Lottery Fund described impact measurement as to some extent 'a game', in the sense of impact measurement as a way of proving worth and communicating to funders and others. In most impact measurement guidance, no distinction is made between understanding impact for itself, and playing the game of measurement. And the importance of making this distinction only emerged through the process of trying to get to grips with impact measurement within the workshops.

Reflecting on the first workshop session: field notes

In practice, the two hours of intensive work did not give quite enough time for participants to settle into the first session and feel they had a grip of 'what impact measurement is'. But it also revealed some of the difficulties we, as facilitators, were having with making that distinction.

Importantly, the 'expertise' of the workshop facilitators was also being developed and tested in the process of putting the systematised definitions and jargon of performance management into practice. This could perhaps be seen as a weakness on our part, or lack of detailed preparation. But it would be more productive to recognise this an important finding in itself, in that the amount of time anyone tasked with impact management, particularly in an overstretched small community organisation, has to devote to reflecting on its philosophical underpinnings is likely to be slight.

The guidance and toolkits available recognise these limitations on time, and that people tend to want a set of simple instructions to follow to visualise their impact. However, part of what makes existing guidance difficult to use is that the practice of putting real experiences and information into the templates can raise questions and compromises – but these are tidied away by attempts at clarity in traditional measurement tools.

By starting the workshops in a similar way, trying to clarify and define the jargon, and give global definition to the difference between 'outcomes' and 'impact' (for example) we perhaps started too far away from real experience.

It seemed important to start by thinking beyond existing measurement, to break away from stock outcomes and think more broadly. While I brought worked through examples that were

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intended to be relevant 'sparks' to begin thinking through the process, these examples still began with the model of impact measurement, fitting real-life experiences into that model, rather than starting from a real-world experience of an organisation and making a model to fit those experiences. Some of these resources are included in Appendix Three of this report.

The scope of small organisations' impact

Right at the very beginning, in the planning stages before we had met with the workshop participants, we started to talk about different ways of measuring impact, and the traditional dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative measures. Our general position, which I don't think changed through the process of the research though we may have come to nuance it differently, was that there is a need for 'countable', quantitative data but that this should sit alongside more descriptive, qualitative data.

The general assumption in discussing these two types of data is that quantitative data – statistics – are seen as scientific, reliable, objective; whilst qualitative data – narrative – is seen as subjective, biased, and subject to interpretation. Despite philosophical and social scientific work that has shown both to be equally socially embedded, there remains a widespread assumption and reliance on the numbers as more 'real', in the practice of being 'evidence-based' – when it comes down to showing value for money. There is room for questioning this, in that the stories of individual journeys may well be more persuasive even with funding organisations, as political arguments for the importance of change.

However, there remains a rhetorical assumption that numbers are 'better'. This is epitomised in the characterising of the two types as 'hard' and 'soft' data, which can dismiss the importance of narrative information. So instead we characterised the two forms as 'statistics and stories' or 'narratives and numbers'. We thought these phrases might emphasise that *both* types of information are likely to be important in demonstrating and understanding impacts, both internally and externally.

Narratives and numbers capture different information. Numbers may be more suited to demonstrating outcomes – countable things that have been achieved. But impact, in the sense of change that has complex causes and is not always expected, may be better told through descriptive stories of change (see Uprichard and Byrne, 2006 for a discussion of the power of narratives in understanding complex change). It may also be the most accessible way of

demonstrating change for small organisations whose impact beyond their immediate users, volunteers or participants is hard to measure at a population level.

A small organisation with a national reach

One of the organisations participating in the workshops was DPPI (Disability, Pregnancy and Parenthood International). This is a national information charity on disability and parenthood, 'a small registered charity, controlled by disabled parents, which promotes better awareness and support for disabled people during pregnancy and as parents'. Providing information by phone, email, letter and in person, the charity reaches disabled parents and professional allies across England. It also produces a range of accessible publications on disabled parenting.

In the workshops, DPPI representatives explained that they wanted to make access to support for and information disabled parents easier, and create better awareness about the issues faced by disabled parents, and acceptance of disabled people as parents in the wider society. This was clear, but thinking about how to measure such changes was more difficult. The organisation certainly did not have the resources to conduct or commission a nation-wide survey of attitudes. And even asking users of the service about their experiences would be difficult, as (unlike many of the other organisations at the workshop) DPPI tended to just have one-off contact with people seeking information, rather than an ongoing relationship with local residents. So collecting large-scale, comparable data on indicators of change was going to be difficult.

Instead, we used the workshop to think about the kinds of information that *were* available to suggest changes DPPI had made. Examples included coverage of their work in a national newspaper, which had led to an increase in use of the service; and stories of how individual users' lives had been improved by the service, where these had been followed up. These potential sources of data could be built on without a great deal of effort, for instance by looking out for stories in the media about disabled parents to get a sense of how positively or negatively they were presented (as an indicator of widespread attitudes). This of course would not give direct evidence of changes made by DPPI, rather than other factors, but coupled with following up a small number of users' experiences, they could suggest how these small stories might indicate a wider effect. This suggested approach began from the information on changes that was available, and thought about how this could be used and developed to understand the organisation's impact.
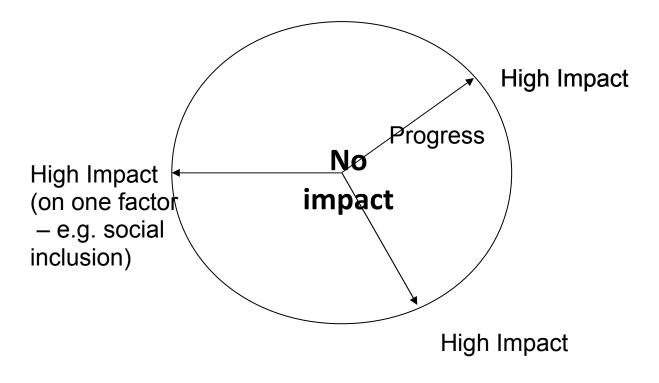

Tools for visualising impact

As noted elsewhere in the report, there are a range of existing tools for visualising impact. As facilitators, we decided to develop one of these tools, 'the impact wheel', which had been used successfully before in performance measurement exercises. The 'wheel' we used was based on

an existing example, for measuring progress in organisational change. The principle is that the wheel has a number of 'spokes', each with a heading or goal that represents one way in which the organisation wishes to make an impact. Progress towards this change is then visualised as moving from the centre to the outer edge of the 'wheel'. This progress can be understood in a numeric scale (e.g. stages 1, 2,3,4) or in more descriptive terms (no impact, some impact, a lot of impact). We presented this tool to the participants and together they brainstormed ideas for their own impact wheels, first for the 'heading' for each spoke, and in a second exercise, for descriptors of how they would recognise progress along each spoke.

Examples of goals for the impact wheel that the groups developed included:

- Social inclusion/lack of loneliness and isolation

- Awareness of issues among the wider population

- Empowerment of service users

- Improved skills and life chances for volunteers

The impact wheel work and the problems of imagining linear change

We started off by thinking this simple shape would be an easy way to organise thinking about impact – the idea of identifying specific areas where an organisation wanted to make a difference (each spoke of the wheel), and a story of what the situation would look like without any impact, through to the ideal change they would want to make (progress along a spoke).

But attempting to do this in the workshop, as a group we quickly identified that this seemed an inappropriate way to visualise impact. Imagining impact as starting at an origin ('no impact') and moving towards (or away from) a goal, became impossible or at best irrelevant to the more holistic way we were inviting each other to think about 'impact'.

Even if we had been developing programmes to measure impact over time, the 'base line' of 'no impact' was not necessarily a clear-cut 'absence of social inclusion' (or whatever) but a specific, complex picture. We tried to imagine how we would identify 'no impact on social inclusion', compared to 'full impact on social inclusion', before working out what intermediate steps on this path might look like. The difficulties that participants had with completing this exercise, and the logical problems with it (would 'complete social inclusion' really be possible?) suggested we had become trapped in a model that did not necessarily work for visualising impact in this context.

The 'wheel' seems more suited to *planning* change, rather than measuring impact. This brought to the fore an issue which we had started to tease out, that impacts might be unexpected – and not easily imagined in a linear model of cause and effect.

Measuring unexpected impacts, and thinking about how an organisation has made a change, is different to planning and monitoring outcomes. If thinking about 'impact' adds anything it is the opportunity to broaden out (without abandoning) our conception beyond the 'SMART' (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bounded) framework of target-setting and its variations, and to think about the complex and unexpected consequences of the work of, in this case, small community organisations.

Complex and unexpected changes

In the conversations around how to understand impact, we tried to give examples as a way of understanding how impact could be imagined. Starting from an abstract model and coming up

with examples worked to spark some ideas in the workshops, but what seemed to be much more effective was the examples that came from experience. Two of these are outlined below.

Real-world impact

Praxis is a support service for migrants in east London. They offer advice, vocational learning, mentoring and cultural and sport activities for migrants. Their chief officer gave a striking example of an impact they had had on social cohesion and integration – he had been invited to a wedding of two people who had met when using the job training services at the centre. Clearly, match-making was not a planned outcome of this activity! But the unexpected consequence of providing a local service which also included opportunities to meet and make friendships, was that people had built local links and family in their new home, and would benefit (and share the benefits) of all of the support that could provide.

Funders were aware of such potential, unplanned-for impacts that community organisations could make too. The chief officer at the Cripplegate Foundation described meeting a participant in one of the local gardening groups Cripplegate had funded, who described how she had received an unexpectedly large number of cards when she had a stay in hospital, from friends she had made in the gardening group. The group could not of course have as one of its planned and quantifiable outcomes, the number of greetings cards received by members when they fell ill. But in terms of impact, this story was an important sign of the difference the group had made to one individual who might otherwise have felt isolated and alone.

Ethics and impact measurement

Most guides to impact measurement advise users to consider 'negative' as well as 'positive' impacts. It becomes even more complex if we recognise that something that could be a positive impact for some (e.g. a warm place for street homeless people to gather) could be experienced as a negative impact by others (e.g. neighbours who feel unsafe about the new use of their local space). Likewise, a change could have both negative and positive impacts on the same person – raising money to continue funding their support networks, whilst making them feel exposed to publicity – and such impacts on lives and feelings are not easily measured, balanced and accounted for to come out with an average 'score' of more or less positive impacts. In the end, it remains up to the person assessing impact (whether writing a report or reading it) to weigh up the complexities, sensitively and questioningly.

Ethical practice was extremely important to all involved. Some more formulaic approaches to ethical practice in both research and community work can systematise accountability into

reports to ethics committees, consent forms and guidelines at the expense of a focus on ethics as a process of weighing up values. As with 'impact', ethics is about values. What is ethical for one person may not seem so for another – ethics are not absolute, but should be an ongoing process of deliberation and testing.

We discussed ethics in the workshops sessions particularly in relation to gathering data for impact evaluations, in interviews or surveys or collecting small stories from volunteers, participants and service users. Initially we approached this in terms of traditional research methods training – think carefully about what data you are collecting and why, how it will be stored, obtain informed consent, let people know they can withdraw at any time, offer compensation if necessary but don't make people feel obliged to answer (or answer in a certain way), think about participants' vulnerabilities or sensitivities and how to deal with them, ensure anonymity and confidentiality as appropriate – and so on. A very specific example from one of the workshop participants, which is outlined in the box below, demonstrates the difficulties of weighing up the potential benefits and harms that could come from impact measurement itself.

Is all publicity good publicity?

One of the organisations involved in the project, Baobab, works with small numbers of very vulnerable child refugees, helping them with mental health issues as well as practical day-to-day life to help them to deal with the severe trauma they have experienced. With a relatively small client group, with extremely complex issues, the most obvious and powerful way that the impact of the organisation's work can be seen is by telling individual stories of the difficulties the people they work with have faced, and how their lives and the lives of those around them have changed as a result of contact with the organisation.

J, who was representing Baobab at the workshop, was particularly involved in fundraising and publicity. She discussed the difficulty she was having with thinking about the ethics of using such individual stories in her work. On the one hand, these stories clearly demonstrated the need for Baobab's work, and were powerful in persuading funders to continue to support it. On the other, J worried that using such personal stories of vulnerable young people, even when they had given consent and been anonymised, could risk exploiting their suffering.

This story illustrated how developing ethical practice is not necessarily about being able to choose a right or wrong, ethical or not, course of action. There is a need to anticipate negative impacts and guard against them as much as possible, but all actions (or lack of action) have potential negative consequences, and it may be better to recognise, reflect and protect

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against these in an ongoing way.

Ways of understanding the combined impact of community organisations

One goal at the outset of this research was to consider ways that community organisations might be able to represent their collective impact, and demonstrate the importance of a strong and diverse community sector. The research process demonstrated that the existing tools for measuring impact are extremely hard to use for small organisations, and began to develop a more eclectic method for using available stories of change to demonstrate the wider and unexpected differences made by an activity, project or organisation. This approach made it less likely that we would come up with, or recommend, a standard format or system into which local groups could input their impact data and come up with a single measure of impact for the sector. However, organisations within the workshops did begin to share ideas about how the groups they worked with locally might overlap, and to think about links between their work and its effects.

Sharing information on change

One of the organisations participating in the workshops was FoodCycle. This is a charity which develops local volunteer groups to gather local surplus food and prepares meals for people in need. They work in partnership with a range of other charities, including a significant project with MIND, and recognised that some of the people they work with, such as homeless people, may also be in contact with other local community groups. FoodCycle already had quite a well developed system for gathering feedback from volunteers and participants, and developed new elements of this through the workshop, but they were also keen to share what information they had gathered on impact with other groups with whom they collaborated. The very simple way of doing this which they suggested was to send copies of their annual report, which would include an impact statement, to those partners. Partners could then see the kinds of difference made by FoodCycle, including the elements to which their own work may have contributed.

This suggests that one simple way of representing the combined impact of community organisations would be to compile the stories of change and impact that different groups had collected, many of which might overlap and connect. The most obvious way to do this would be through existing umbrella groups (like VAI) who could use this kind of information to lobby for the importance of the sector as a whole.

Summary of findings and recommendations

The language and practices of evaluation suggest an expertise which is scientific and accredited, whereas in practice impact measurement and evaluation, is to a great extent interpretive. The capacity to do successful and useful impact measurement is not necessarily about learning the rules, but about understanding the broader operation of the game, how the rules work (and how to develop your own rules). To an extent, building the capacity of groups to work with impact measurement meant building their confidence about being able to say for themselves what 'impact' as a concept, as well as their measurements, means (in relation to, but not necessarily dependent on, existing definitions from 'experts'). The participants had different levels of experience of working with formal evaluation frameworks, but it was not necessarily the case that familiarity with the form of evaluation and completion of data in such forms meant that thinking in the holistic way invited by impact measurement was any easier.

As noted above, there is a proliferation of toolkits and guidance notes on how to measure impact. Despite the efforts of their authors to simplify the process, these are often overwhelming, in length if not in jargon. Though this report aims to be useful to small organisations measuring impact, and to funding organisations asking them to do so, it does not seem helpful to re-produce such a set of step-by-step tools when so many already exist (and details of many are provided in the appendix). These toolkits can be useful for organisations as a reference. But what this report aims to do instead is to provide a broader perspective on 'impact measurement', and to empower small organisations and others to feel confident with the idea of understanding their impact in a way that is useful for them, and to take part in conversations and actions with a sense of *why* they are measuring impact, as well as *how* they are doing it. It is hoped that it will also open up a conversation between funders and small organisations about the reasons for impact measurement, the reasons for some of the difficulties it presents, and ways to start to overcome these where possible.

Thinking about some of the techniques that seem important in making impact measurement useful to organisations, and which enable organisations to convince funders and others of their success, it was clear that an important element was knowing how to 'play the game'. The tricky part of the game of evaluation and impact measurement is that the most successful players of the game are the ones who have not only learnt the rules, but learnt how to bend them. So, the recommendation of this report is that small organisations find ways to play, but bend, the rules of the game of impact measurement. This also means being confident in the feelings about what is effective; and being prepared to argue for it and debate it with funders and others. This

type of passion is not something that most small community organisations are short of – and these conversations are ones that funders already seem to be having internally.

The research undertaken for this report suggests that what might be usefully gained by creating a focus on 'impact', is a move in some sense away from linear thinking about change – and instead an eclectic and responsive approach to identifying changes that have happened as a result of an organisation's work.

- Small community organisations should have the confidence to explain impact in a way that suits them, and which captures the change they make in a way that makes sense to them

- Funders and support organisations for the community sector should create systems which are able to understand this more open way of measuring impact, and encourage small organisations to report the change they make in the way that makes sense to the small organisation (rather than to a standard form for the ease of the funder, for example)

- At the same time, small organisations should be challenged, and challenge themselves, to think beyond their existing ideas about the difference they make

- Funders and support organisations for the community sector could help to provide this opportunity for challenge in a supportive way, for example by supporting workshops where small organisations can share amongst themselves the ways that they understand the difference that they make

- Impacts are not necessarily best thought of as linear (we did X, which caused Y to happen)

- Systematised, formal frameworks for measuring and planning performance are useful, but these are designed for measuring and planning outcomes, i.e. specific and anticipated changes

- For impact measurement to add new information, this research suggests a flexible, open and eclectic approach to gathering stories of things that have changed as a result of the organisations' existence may be the most useful

- For small organisations, working with complex change, noticing and collecting stories of the changes in the lives they touch, on a day to day basis, may be the most effective source of information on impact

- Starting from the real experiences of small community organisations, and thinking about the changes they see and how these are represented, is a better use of time and energy than starting from prescriptive theoretical models

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APPENDIX ONE: Existing Impact Measurement Tools

Community Matters has developed the 'Your Value!' tool, aimed at helping small community sector organisations to measure their social impact. Users must pay to obtain the full guidance, and for additional training and support, but illustrative demonstrations and an example report are accessible for free from their website:

http://www.communitymatters.org.uk/content/494/Assessing-Social-Value

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations has an online guide to measuring impact for voluntary organisations, based on research done in 2003. It is available here:

http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/strategy-impact/learn/impact/improving-impact

The new economics foundation has a Prove It! toolkit with a series of tools that can be adapted for local use, available online here: http://www.proveit.org.uk/overview.html

For detailed practical advice on using SROI methods for measuring impact, see Nicholls et al, 2009, available at
http://www.neweconomics.org/sites/neweconomics.org/files/A_guide_to_Social_Return_on_Investment_1.pdf

More resources on SROI, including examples of case studies applying SROI methods, is available through the SROI network, http://www.thesroinetwork.org/

Homeless Link have produced a housing sector-specific guide to outcome measurement tools. Note that this focuses on *outcomes*, for the specific user group, rather than impacts more widely.
http://www.homelessoutcomes.org.uk/resources/1/Guide%20to%20Outcomes%20Tools%20Second%20Edition.pdf

Hall Aitken have produced a guide with different ideas for measuring soft outcomes (again, outcomes rather than impacts), which is available here
http://www.hallaitken.co.uk/component/option,com_docman/Itemid,10/gid,63/task,doc_details/

A good source for more discussion, reflection, research and information is the Third Sector Research Centre www.tsrc.ac.uk

The Social Impact Analysts Association is a new organisation which intends to develop further knowledge and resources in this area http://siaassociation.org/

APPENDIX TWO: Participants in the research

Organisation	Purpose
Baluji Music Foundation	'Baluji Music Foundation promotes understanding and enjoyment of all kinds of music from the Indian sub-continent. "Promoting disabled people in the Arts and the Arts in disabled people"' See http://www.balujimusicfoundation.org/
Baobab	'The Baobab Centre was established in 2008 and exists to offer specialised therapeutic services to some of the thousands of children, adolescents and young people who arrive in Britain each year fleeing from the trauma of political violence. The young people with whom the Baobab Centre now works come from 22 different countries and many more ethnicities, some were child soldiers, some trafficked for sexual purposes, and many were raped. All have experienced torture and abuse, been victims of organised violence and experienced profound personal losses in their young lives.' See http://www.baobabsurvivors.org/pages/about-us.php
Big Lottery Fund	'Every year BIG gives out millions of pounds from the National Lottery to good causes. Our money goes to community groups and to projects that improve health, education and the environment.' See http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/index/about-uk
Caris	'Caris Islington is a registered charity which runs two projects in Islington - a Bereavement Counselling Service for children and adults, and a Cold Weather Shelter.' See http://www.carisislington.org/
Cripplegate Foundation	'Cripplegate Foundation is a local, independent charity. We make grants in Islington and parts of the City of London. We provide grants that aim to: •address poverty •increase access to opportunities •build social cohesion. We give grants both to organisations and to individuals.' See http://www.cripplegate.org/
DPPI	Disability, Pregnancy & Parenthood International is a national information charity on disability and parenthood, which promotes better awareness and support for disabled people during pregnancy and as parents. See http://www.dppi.org.uk/

FoodCycle	'We combine volunteers, surplus food and a free kitchen space to create nutritious meals for people affected by food poverty in th UK and positive social change in the community.' See http://www.foodcycle.org.uk
London Borough of Islington (Community Safety Team)	See www.islington.gov.uk
Margins Project	'The Margins Project, based in the Union Chapel, provides a range of vital support services to people facing homelessness, crisis and isolation in our community and beyond. ' See http://www.unionchapel.org.uk/pages/margins.html
Minority Matters	'Aiming High Tuition Centre established in 2010 and provides supplementary education as a Saturday School for up to 53 children aged 5 – 16 years of age within the boroughs of Islington and Camden, targeting the Minority Ethnic Community. AHTC are passionate about promoting equality in education and enabling all young people and providing supplementary education, following English, Maths and Science curriculums from Key Stages 1 - 4.' See minoritymatters.org.uk
Praxis	'Praxis is a busy centre in East London visited by over 10,000 people each year. It provides a wealth of advice and support services to migrants and refugees from all over the world, as well as a welcoming meeting place for displaced communities.' See www.praxis.org.uk
Voluntary Action Islington	'Voluntary Action Islington is the membership organisation for people working to make a positive difference to life in Islington.' See www.vai.org.uk

APPENDIX THREE:

Resources produced as part of the action research

Mapping the measurement of Impact

Hannah Jones for VAI and Goldsmiths

Dec 2011

Area of Impact	Example definitions	Example indicators	Indicator available?
Social Justice	*Life is fair for all*		
	"the equal worth of all citizens; the equal right to be able to meet their basic needs; the need to spread opportunities and life chances as widely as possible; the requirement that we reduce and where possible eliminate unjustified inequalities" (Commission for Social Justice, 1994 quoted in Ledwith, 2005:26).

"(1) everyone accepts and knows that the others accept the same principles of justice, and (2) the basic social institutions generally satisfy and are generally known to satisfy these principles" (Rawls, 1999:4).

Everyone is free from "the five faces of oppression – exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence" (Young, 2011 [1990]:64). | % of local population in employment (by age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, transgender, social class, neighbourhood) | Yes, at ward and borough level by National Statistics. Need to check whether this is disaggregated by all the suggested factors). |
		Educational qualifications (disaggregated as above)	Yes, at ward and borough level by National Statistics. Need to check whether this is disaggregated by all the suggested factors).
		Infant mortality rates (disaggregated as above)	Yes, at borough (and ward?) level by National Statistics. Need to check whether this is disaggregated by all the suggested factors).
		Life expectancy (disaggregated as above)	Yes, at borough (and ward?) level by National Statistics. Need to check whether this is disaggregated by all the suggested factors).

	"Participatory parity", that is, "social arrangements that permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers", requiring (1) distribution of material resources that enable independence and voice for all, and (2) equal respect and equal opportunity for to achieve social esteem for all (Fraser, 1996:30-1). "To make Islington fairer means reducing poverty and inequality in the areas that matter most to Islington people's life chances" (The Islington Fairness Commission, 2011:10).	% population living below nationally-defined poverty line	Yes, at borough (and ward?) level by National Statistics.
		% living in over-crowded housing	Yes, at borough (and ward?) level by National Statistics.
		% agreeing that they are treated fairly by local or national institutions	Need to check (see below).
		% agreeing that all people are treated fairly by local or national institutions	Possible comparator indicators (e.g. NI 4 % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality; NI 5 Overall/general satisfaction with local area) in the national and local Place survey. Would need to check what data will continue to be collected in future.
		OTHERS?	
Empowerment	*People have control over their lives*		
Community Cohesion	*People get along with each other*		
Well-being and happiness	*People are happy or content*		

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VAI Evidencing Impact Session 2: Group Exercise

EXAMPLE TABLE – this is not a definitive statement but simply an example to help with explaining how the exercise works, and to spark ideas.

THE TYPE OF IMPACT YOU WILL MAKE: Empowerment			
WHAT YOU MEAN BY THIS: "Instead of following predetermined plans, leaders and people, mutually identified, together create the guidelines of their action" (Freire, 1996 [1970]: 162).			
Level of change	*Description of this change, or what this amount of impact will look or feel like*	*How you would measure this*	*Does data already exist that measures this?*
No impact	People are apathetic. They do not feel that they have any control over their own lives, and they do not take control over their own lives. Decisions about the local area are made by leaders who are remote from ordinary people and who do not communicate with them.	% of people who feel that they can make a difference to decisions in their area	Yes - NI 4 "% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality" in the national and local Place survey. Would need to check what data will continue to be collected in future.
		Evidence of lively local political debate and diversity of ideas	Not yet – but could count the campaigning letters to the local newspaper, local evidence of organising such as leaflets or flyposting.
A little impact	Leaders begin to consult with local people about decisions, but this does not necessarily influence their decisions. Ordinary people feel that they do not have the power to influence what happens to them or their local area, but they would like to make their own decisions.	Evidence of changes in local institutions following consultation or involvement from the community.	This might be collected by the council, health trusts or other public bodies as an account of their responses to consultations.

Noticeable impact	There are opportunities for people to have their voices heard, such as public events, meetings, newsletters or online forums. Some people have started to use these forums, but significant groups of people remain outside of them. There is evidence that some of the ideas expressed in these forums have made a difference to material aspects of people's lives.	% of people voting in local elections	Yes, at ward and borough level.
Significant impact	There are a large number of forums where people share opinions and organize actions, events or services. The majority of local people feel that if they wanted to make a difference to their lives or that of their local area (or more widely) they could find ways of doing so. There is evidence that dialogues between different groups of people (including between leaders and ordinary people) have changed the ways that people think or behave.	Number of local community groups or campaigning groups	Data held by VAI or relevant umbrella organization?
		% of people involved in community groups or campaigns	Data held by VAI or relevant umbrella organization? Also NI 5 "Civic participation in the local area"; NI 6 "Participation in regular volunteering" in the national and local Place survey. Would need to check what data will continue to be collected in

| A very big impact | Most people can identify examples of where their actions have contributed to a change (or lack of change!). This does not necessarily mean that all people always get what they want (or what they wanted initially) but they are able to articulate their opinions, to hear others' opinions, and work together to shape action. In particular, there are examples of where leaders have shaped their actions in collaboration with ordinary people, and leaders are not seen as distant from ordinary people's concerns. There are no specific groups of people who have been excluded from being involved in dialogues or decision-making. | | future. |
| | | % of elected officials from different backgrounds (e.g. (by age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, transgender, social class, neighbourhood) | Yes, for some of these categories at national level – possibly at borough level. |

NOW FILL IN YOUR OWN TABLE

THE TYPE OF IMPACT YOU WILL MAKE: WHAT YOU MEAN BY THIS:			
Level of change	*Description of this change, or what this amount of impact will look or feel like*	*How you would measure this*	*Does data already exist that measures this?*

Preparation for week 3: Think about where you might find the types of data you identified for measuring impact in Workshop 2, and enter it in the appropriate column below:

Information you already collect	Information you think is available elsewhere (also note where this might be available from)	Information you could easily collect yourself/within your organisation	Other information which you are not sure exists