

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Assessing Impact

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Foreword

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation's mission is to maximise opportunities for individuals and communities to realise their potential and to experience and enjoy a better quality of life, now and in the future. In particular, we are concerned with children and young people and disadvantaged people.

In line with our founder Paul Hamlyn's values, we believe in finding better ways to do things. We try to pay particular attention to long-term and challenging issues and encourage participation by those with direct experience of these issues in shaping the work of the organisations we fund. We look for the development of work with the potential to influence practice beyond the scope of the organisation doing the work.

We know that to fulfil our mission and live these values, we need to understand the impact that the Foundation is making. The sorts of changes the Foundation seeks are too important to do otherwise and we rely on evidence of impact to help us to use the Foundation's resources wisely.

This report is about our new approach to assessing the overall impact of our funding. Like other grant-makers, we recognise the challenges in doing so. We hope they will let us have their comments on the approach we have developed, which is work in progress, and which we offer as a contribution to the very active current debate about how to evaluate impact.

The information about the impact of our funding and activities will also become a key part of the way in which we fulfil our legal duty, as a charity, to report on the benefit that we provide to the public. As part of this, it is important that we understand and report on the benefit we deliver ourselves, as well as that of the activities we fund.

The impact reported here represents the combined results of work by very many individuals and organisations over the last few years. We are pleased to be able to acknowledge their work in this way and hope that, through the further development of our approach to understanding impact, we are showing the same commitment to outcomes and learning that we look for in our grantees. We hope that sharing this assessment of the impact of our funding will help us to develop even stronger partnerships with all those we work with.

Finally, my thanks to Jane Steele, the Foundation's Head of Impact and Evaluation, who developed the process and the framework, and to Paul Strauss, who worked with Jane as the Research Analyst on this project.

Robert Dufton

Director

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Introduction

Like all grant-makers, PHF wants to know what difference its funding is making in the areas it has chosen to target. And, like other funders, we recognise that it can be far from straightforward to develop a complete or accurate picture of what has happened as a result of our funding. That's why PHF is involved with others in the lively debates and active developments in the sector about how to assess and increase impact.

A mid-term review of the Foundation's current strategic plan pointed to the progress made towards becoming a more strategic philanthropist and the need, in the next phase, to do more to gauge impact and capture and share learning within PHF and the organisations we support. This report is about a new approach developed in the light of that recommendation. What it provides is essentially a map of the outcomes that have come about through our grant-making over the last few years.

The questions that we set out to answer are critical ones for organisations like PHF. How can a funder that supports a large and diverse number of projects begin to assess the overall impact of its funding? Using the approach set out in this report, we are able to discover how the patterns of impact achieved match up against the Foundation's strategic aims. This will inform our discussions about whether doing things differently – or doing different things – would improve the contribution we make to the quality of life and opportunities for the people our grantees work with.

We set out as well to understand how we might change our own ways of working to help grantees to improve their own effectiveness, which would also help PHF funding to achieve greater impact overall. We reported in 2010 on our Grantee Perception Report, which asked grantees about their experiences of working with us, and we will repeat that survey in 2013. Grantees' views of PHF and what we have learned about their evidence will both inform the sort of support we offer to grantees.

We believe that by reporting publicly on the impact of our funding and learning from what we find, we are also putting into practice the sort of accountability and the focus on learning and outcomes that we look for in our grantees. We invite and welcome comments on the approach outlined in this report, which we offer as a contribution to thinking in the funding sector about improving and assessing impact.

The Foundation's Strategic Plan 2006–13

Our strategic aims are:

1. Enabling people to experience and enjoy the arts.
2. Developing people's education and learning.
3. Integrating marginalised young people who are at times of transition.

In addition, we have three related aims:

4. Advancing through research the understanding of the relationships between the arts, education and learning and social change.
5. Developing the capacity of organisations and people who facilitate our strategic aims.
6. Developing the Foundation itself to be an exemplar foundation, existing in perpetuity.

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About PHF

The work we fund takes many different approaches to meeting a wide range of needs but there are some common themes. We aim to support innovation and work that takes a participatory approach to achieving its objectives. Across all the programmes we are particularly concerned with children and young people and disadvantaged people. All grants are intended to serve our overall mission, which is to help people realise their potential and enjoy a better quality of life.

We operate through three programmes in the UK, concerned with the Arts, Education and Learning and Social Justice. Each programme runs both an Open Grants scheme and a number of Special Initiatives. ‘Open Grants’ are made in response to proposals from organisations that meet the Foundation’s interests and objectives. This includes supporting organisations to develop their own approaches to benefit their service users and communities.

Our Special Initiatives set out to achieve social change in a rather different way. Most involve a number of organisations or individuals working both separately and collaboratively, over a number of years, to achieve the overall strategic aims of the initiative, with PHF providing direction, coordination, and evaluation. With our Special Initiatives, we are particularly interested in disseminating what we learn and advocating for wide-reaching change where the initiative has shown that this could be of benefit to people and communities elsewhere.

We recognise that the positive impact of our funding for individuals and communities can sometimes be maximised by helping organisations to find better ways to do things and to develop new skills and strategies for sustaining their work. We therefore intend our funding to have an impact not only on individuals and communities directly, but also on the organisations that support them, and on practice and policy within their sectors.

About terminology

Definitional difficulties dog many discussions of outcomes and impact, with people using the terms to mean different things or using them interchangeably. In this report we have endeavoured to use the following definitions:

Outcomes: the results of a project or piece of funded work AND the categories of change included in our impact framework.

Impact: The overall difference made by PHF funding, or by a programme or intervention.

4 Assessing the impact of PHF funding: the approach

Our aim was to develop and test an approach to understanding the impact of our whole portfolio of funding. We wanted to build up a picture from existing evidence rather than commission new research or evaluation.

Effective evaluation strategies have to fit their organisation's overall strategic approach. Our funding strategy means that assessing the overall impact of PHF funding involves particular challenges. With as many as 400 Open Grants 'live' at any one time (lasting up to three years each) and ten Special Initiatives under way, there is a considerable volume and rich diversity of work and outcomes to map and understand. Further, with our commitment to disadvantaged young people cutting across all our programmes and our interest in fostering the interaction between the arts and learning, none of our strategic aims are the exclusive territory of any one programme.

If PHF had fewer grantees, a narrow set of objectives and a prescriptive approach to how grantees should achieve them, we could ask those we fund to sign up to a limited number of intended outcomes and some standard ways of measuring their results. As the funder, we could then compile a useful guide to the overall impact of our funding by adding up the results from our different grantees. But that would not fit PHF's approach to grant-making and social change.

Like many grant-makers, we work with each grantee to agree what they intend to achieve as a result of the work we are funding. Our intention is that self-evaluation will help the grantee manage their work, understand how to improve their impact and share what they learn with others. We agree up to five outcome targets with each grantee for each year of their funding. These outcome targets are not standardised or shared between different grantees. Rather, they are very specific to each organisation's objectives and activities, context, client groups and other factors. Results are measured and reported in different ways, depending on the particular outcome target.

Grantees report to us regularly (usually on an annual basis for grants lasting more than one year) on the actual outcomes of the work we have funded. These reports are the basis for discussions between PHF staff and the grantee about how well the work is achieving their objectives and what the challenges are. In longer grants, the report informs our discussions and agreements with the grantee about the next year's objectives. Of course, intentions and results are often different and we are keen to understand what the grantee is learning from their work and what additional or unexpected outcomes have resulted.

Mapping

We find that, far from lacking information about the outcomes of the work we fund, PHF has a wealth of information – from grantees’ reports and the reports on Special Initiatives that we commission from external evaluators. Our aim was to develop a way of grouping this large collection of pieces of very specific evidence into categories, so that patterns of impact were revealed. In other words, we needed a map to enable us to see the ‘wood for the trees’. Our map should be a map of actual outcomes on the ground, whether intended at the outset or not.

The categories were defined through a process of sorting the evidence of actual outcomes from grantees’ and Special Initiatives’ reports into groups of related outcomes. We found that we needed a classification with two levels in order to organise the evidence into a manageable framework, which would provide both an immediately accessible overview and allow a finer grained understanding of the types of changes being made within each category.

The result was, at the upper level, a framework comprising 14 actual outcomes of PHF-funded work, which we could group into the three forms of impact to which PHF aspires: on individuals and communities, organisations, and policy and practice. Six of the 14 are outcomes experienced by individuals and communities; three are outcomes of organisational change; five are changes in wider practice and policy, based on the results of PHF-funded work. These 14 give the overview of the impact of PHF funding.

But for some purposes we need a map on a larger scale – one that shows more detail and names the different neighbourhoods and districts within the city, as well as the city itself. So, at the next level in the framework are 37 more specific types of change, which we also call ‘sub-outcomes’, each of them a sub-category of one of the 14 main outcomes.

The framework is essentially a classification of the outcomes achieved through PHF funding. The development of the framework enabled us, for the first time, to know, from a systematic approach, what these outcomes are – across the whole of the Foundation’s funding and at two different levels of detail. At the upper level there are 14 broad outcomes, each of which can be more deeply understood through its sub-outcomes (the lower level).

Framework

Individuals and communities

1. Children and young people (CYP) Marginalised young people develop improved life skills and wellbeing and/or skills for a more successful future and enhance their employment prospects

- 1a Develop attributes and skills that will facilitate the development of a more successful and happy future e.g. overall wellbeing, self-esteem, confidence, critical thinking, self-awareness, resilience, ability to build and manage relationships, team working, leadership
- 1b Improve attendance at school or continue with HE courses, when at risk of drop-out
- 1c Progress in their levels of attainment, gain qualifications or formal recognition of skills (accreditation)
- 1d Move into jobs or volunteering or (re-) engage in education and training
- 1e Improve speaking and listening skills
- 1f Increase their engagement with learning, improve their behaviour for learning, and improve their capability for and attitude to lifelong learning

Young people who have been involved with the criminal justice scheme as offenders or suspects:

- 1g Develop attributes and skills that will facilitate the development of a more successful, happy and stable future
- 1h Reduce their incidence of re-offending

2. Voice and influence Actual and potential service users, particularly marginalised people, have increased voice in decisions about services that affect their lives

- 2a Service users develop skills to make their views known and to have a dialogue with service providers
- 2b Their views influence and shape decisions about service design and delivery

3. Continuing professional development (CPD) Professionals/practitioners/staff in a range of services and settings improve their practice and the results for the service users they work with, through participation in effective continuing professional development (CPD)

- 3a **General**
Professionals/practitioners/staff (apart from specialist groups below) gain new skills/experience/learning, which equip them to improve their practice, for the benefit of service users

- 3b **Artists**
Artists working in participatory settings have access to better quality CPD, the users/participants they work with report greater satisfaction

- 3c **Teachers**
Teachers and others in educational settings participate in CPD that improves their practice to the benefit of students' learning

4. Artists Artists use new opportunities to pursue ideas and develop their work

- 4a New opportunities used by artists to develop their work

5. Arts access People have increased access to and/or participate in arts/cultural activity

- 5a **New and larger audiences**
Arts and cultural activities reach new and larger audiences
- 5b **New access**
Groups with little or no experience of particular arts and cultural activities have new access (e.g. by visiting, viewing, listening)
- 5c **Arts participation**
People participate in new arts/cultural experiences

- 5d **Longer term interest in the arts**
People develop new, longer-term interest in the arts and an enhanced understanding of particular art forms or ideas

6. Community Communities are strengthened by the development of stronger relationships between people within the community

- 6a **Intergenerational relationships**
Intergenerational understanding and relationships are developed and sustained

- 6b **Relationships within or between communities**
Relationships are developed and/or strengthened within or between communities

Organisations

- 7. User needs**
Organisations change their services in ways that demonstrably respond better to the needs of service users and local communities
- 7a New groups**
Organisations develop the capacity and capability to respond to groups new to them e.g. marginalised young people, and to develop appropriate new services or activities
- 7b Galleries and museums community engagement**
Community engagement becomes central to the ways in which museums and galleries work and results in collaborative exhibition development
- 7c Mental health agencies and young people**
Mental health agencies work with young people to develop services that provide earlier intervention and help young people look after their own mental health more effectively
- 8. Business models**
Organisations develop new business models to enable new work or types of service and/or longer-term sustainability of the organisation and services, to the benefit of their service users
- 8a New business models**
New business models and forms of service delivery are developed, enhancing financial stability of the organisation and its services for users
- 8b Leading to further funding**
The success of PHF-funded work enables organisations to make a successful case for continuing support/funding from other funders or commissioners. Service users benefit from changes and the sustainability of services
- 8c New evaluation practices**
Organisations develop new models (in the form of tools, frameworks, methods or reporting) and/or skills by which they can more successfully measure their outcomes or demonstrate their impact
- 9. Partnership**
Organisations develop new, formal collaborations, networks and partnerships. Partnership skills are sufficiently developed and embedded in the organisation to enable more effective services for/relationships with users in the future
- 9a** New and stronger partnerships and collaborations enable the improvement of services or creation of new ones, to the benefit of service users

Practice and policy

- 10. Local practice**
Significant numbers of organisations in the relevant sectors in the local area adopt practices, including innovations, shown through PHF-funded work and evaluation to improve outcomes for their service users/target groups/audiences etc.
- 10a** Local organisations adopt practices and ways of working that make them more responsive to users' needs or community interest
- 10b** Local take-up of practices developed to encourage and sustain learning
- 10c** Local take-up of other practices
- 11. Practice, wide area**
Significant numbers of organisations in the relevant sectors, across a wide geographical area, adopt practices, including innovations, shown through PHF-funded work and evaluation to improve outcomes for their service users/target groups/audiences etc.
- 11a Users' needs**
Organisations across a wide area adopt practices/ways of working that make them more responsive to users' needs or community interest
- 11b Learning**
Wide take-up of practices developed to encourage and sustain learning
- 11c Student retention**
Higher education institutions adopt practices found to be effective in increasing student retention
- 11d General**
Wide take-up of other practices
- 12. Local policy**
Politicians and policy makers at local levels develop awareness and understanding of arguments for policy change, based on evidence from PHF-funded work. In some cases, PHF evidence is known to influence a decision to change policy
- 12a** Influence on policy takes place at a local level
- 13. Policy, wide area**
Politicians and policy makers at national levels develop awareness and understanding of arguments for policy change, based on evidence from PHF-funded work. In some cases, PHF evidence is known to influence a decision to change policy
- 13a** Influence on policy takes place at a national level
- 14. International**
Policy and/or practice internationally is influenced by the evidence of PHF-funded work
- 14a** Influence on policy and/or practice takes place at an international level

Coding and counting

Knowing what these outcomes are is a step forward. A further step would be to know how many Open Grants and Special Initiatives produced each of the types of outcome and sub-outcome in the framework, including which were the most and least numerous results to flow from PHF funding.

To answer these questions, we reviewed, grant by grant, grantees' reports and extracted a summary of each of the outcomes reported by each grantee. We then assigned to each grant codes for the appropriate outcome and sub-outcome categories from the framework i.e. the categories into which the specific outcomes of the funded work fell. The same process followed for Special Initiatives, using evaluators' reports. Most Open Grants and all the Special Initiatives were assigned a number of different codes, since most of the activities we support are multi-faceted and many spread over several years.

We incorporated the coding system into GIFTS, the off-the-shelf grants management system used by PHF and many other funders, so that the data could be analysed with management information about the coded grants.

Sampling

To test the approach, and because the reviewing and coding of evidence is quite a slow process when done thoroughly, we sampled grants rather than looking at the totality of grants made during the strategic plan period in which we were interested. Between October 2007 and March 2012, 236 Open Grants were approved and completed within PHF's three UK programmes. We analysed the outcomes of 51% (120) of these, a sample which is proportionate to the different numbers of grants made by each of our three UK programmes during this period. The variables used for selecting the sample were: the financial value of the grant, length of time covered by the grant, and the start date. We used GIFTS to select the sample.

Our Special Initiatives run for longer than most Open Grants. Most are ongoing and a number have been running long enough to have produced interim reports. So we included all the eight initiatives that were started and/or active during the strategic plan period and are either complete or have been running long enough to have evidence of outcomes to date.

This process of summarising and coding outcomes provides what we describe as the 'impact map' of PHF funding, see pp 12–13.

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About the evidence

We set out in this project to do two things. The first was to discover whether the evidence available to us about grantee-level outcomes was suitable for a producing a classification of funding outcomes, a ‘big picture’ of the changes brought about through PHF funding. As we’ve already discussed, we found that it was suitable and that it could also allow us to develop a finer grained understanding of the types of change contributing to each broad outcome. Having developed the classification, we established that it was possible to code the evidence and produce a map showing how many grants and Special Initiatives had contributed to each outcome.

Our second main purpose in carrying out a systematic review of grantees’ evidence was to understand whether we, as the funder, might need to do more to help grantees generate evidence that would be even more useful to both them and the Foundation. Here we were concerned not with what the grantees’ and evaluators’ evidence told us about the impact of our funding but with exploring the characteristics of the evidence, to understand how much it can tell us and grantees, and what its limitations are.

The importance of the evidence to grantees

In our relationships with grantees, we are aware of the value and importance to the grantee of appropriate types of evidence about the outcomes of their work, whether those outcomes are gratifying or disappointing. The Foundation’s approach to grant-making involves agreeing with each grantee what their intended outcomes and targets are. While we provide reporting guidelines we do not require evidence or reports to be provided to a particular structure. This is because we believe that the information grantees collect about their work should be as useful to them in managing and improving their activities as it is in informing us. We want it to be seen by the grantee as central to their work, rather than as nothing more than a funding requirement.

We’ve summarised the consequences to grantees of having either good evidence or lacking any or adequate evidence about both strong impact and lack of impact:

	Strong impact	Lack of impact
Good evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Nature and extent of impact is known – Learning about how to achieve and improve the impact can be shared – Activities and outcomes can be replicated – Strong case for further funding – Evidence supports further development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Nature and extent of lack of impact is known – Grantee can understand what needs to change and how to go about this – Grantee can make the case to funder for continuing support – Learning from the trialling of unsuccessful approaches can be shared
No/inadequate evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Nature and extent of impact is not known – Work cannot be described for replication by others – Grantee cannot make the case for further funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Nature and extent of the lack of impact is not known – Grantee has no evidence to guide next steps – Grantee cannot make a case for further funding or development

The quality of the evidence

To be counted and included in the map, any piece of evidence had to be judged by the PHF team doing the work to give a sufficiently plausible and convincing account that an outcome had been achieved. We took a conservative approach to these judgements, erring on the side of caution, so as to avoid the possibility of over-estimating or over-claiming impact. There were some, though relatively few, instances of outcomes being reported with little or no evidence to back this up and these were excluded from the count. It is probable, therefore, that we have under-estimated impact.

It was quickly apparent that evidence quality sometimes varied between the different sub-outcomes reported by the same grantee in the same report and that quality varied quite widely across the whole set. So, to help to answer our second question, about whether steps were needed to improve the type and quality of evidence, we assessed the quality of evidence provided for each of the 573 instances of sub-outcomes that we coded.

For this exercise to be useful, our assessments needed to be based on appropriate criteria and to be consistent. We devised five criteria – to do with rigour, clarity, appropriate measurement, completeness and depth – and applied these to each sub-outcome, keeping expectations proportional to what we know of grantees' capacity and the nature of the funded work. About one third (30%) of the evidence was assessed as 'good' and this included some exemplary examples. Fifteen per cent was 'poor', with the rest – the overall majority (55%) – falling in between and labelled by us as 'average'.

The wider scene

We would be interested in learning from any similar work elsewhere. It would be particularly useful to understand how evidence quality varies between different grant-making strategies. We suspect, for example, that evidence quality is better when a funder focuses on a small number of objectives in a programme and provides intensive support and guidance to grantees, throughout the funding period, to help them meet standardised outcomes, using agreed evaluation methods and metrics. Funders not operating in this way, including PHF, need to develop different approaches to evidence quality.

A recent survey¹ of 1,000 charities by New Philanthropy Capital, part-funded by PHF, indicates that many in the charitable sector need more support to generate the type of evidence that they need and their funders require. It seems that the case for the importance of good evidence has been made convincingly to most charities: of those surveyed, 78% believed that measuring impact makes organisations more effective. Yet only 25% had been able to use evaluation to improve services. Barriers to better impact measurement included: a lack of skills and expertise (61%), not knowing what to measure (50%) or how to measure (53%) and a lack of funding and resources (78%).

We were concerned in this process not only with grantees' reports but also with assessing the impact of our Special Initiatives, most of which are ongoing. We found that it was not always straightforward to extract, from evaluators' reports and our own monitoring information, what we need to give a complete picture of the degree of impact to date.

Timing of evidence collection

As well as developing this overall assessment of evidence quality, to inform our future strategy, we looked at the timing of final reporting by grantees and evaluators. At PHF we try to pay particular attention to the types of change that can take a long time to bring about and to doing what we can to ensure that changes are more than short-lived. Some outcomes take longer than the lifetime of a grant to become fully established and there are areas where outcomes can only be properly discerned after a longer period of time. We found that some of our evidence in some parts of the map was evidence of outputs that could be expected to lead to the outcome but had not yet done so.

1. *Making an Impact*
Eibhlín Ní Ógáin, Tris Lumley,
David Pritchard. New Philanthropy
Capital, October 2012

For example, as part of our ‘voice and influence’ outcome, some of the evidence presented is of structures that present new opportunities for users to have influence on service providers and of commitments to act on users’ recommendations, rather than of actual service change being implemented. By following developments for longer, we would know more about whether, for example, the young people sitting on organisations’ boards, and the user groups involved in training statutory sector workers, led to services meeting their needs more effectively.

For 25% of the 573 sub-outcomes, we judged that it could have been both useful and feasible to have arranged some follow-up work with the grantee, to see if outcomes were further developed or sustained beyond the end of the grant.

Evidence for learning and improvement

As a funder we are interested in learning and improvement as much as evidence of impact. We aim to do more to facilitate the sharing of experience between grantees; evidence about why innovations worked, or did not produce the results grantees and we had hoped for, is a rich and valuable resource.

We therefore noted whether grantees’ reports provided useful learning and reflections that might help other grantees working on similar issues or in similar ways. Useful information about how and why outcomes were successfully achieved was provided for 59% of the sub-outcomes reported. For 9% there was some useful reflection on explanations for approaches failing or being less successful than intended. The information about reasons for success included a generally higher level of analysis and reflection than about reasons for lack of success, which tended to be much weaker.

In summary we identified three main areas – overall quality of impact evidence, longer-term follow-up and reflections on reasons for success or lack of it – in which improvements in evidence would allow a deeper understanding of impact and enhance learning about how to improve outcomes, by both the Foundation and grantees.

Attribution or contribution?

Finally, as for most funders and for all with an interest in evaluation, the attribution of outcomes to funding is an important issue. There are two aspects to this: identifying the activities that would not have existed without the funding and knowing whether the outcomes reported are the result of those activities alone or influenced as well by other factors.

During the grant approval process and before a grantee receives the first payment and begins work, detailed discussions between PHF staff and grantees lead to agreement about exactly what the funding is to be used for and how it relates to other funding and activities. In many cases, therefore, it is possible to attribute change to the funding, in the sense that the grant created activities that would not otherwise have existed. Sometimes, however, we make joint funding arrangements, which make it more difficult to distinguish the outcomes of the separate grants, and it would be unreasonable to expect the grantee to do so.

On the other point – would change have happened anyway – we look for approaches to measurement and analysis that aim to link activity to outcome as clearly and convincingly as possible. But we also accept that it is not always possible to know whether outcomes are attributable to PHF funding alone or whether our funding contributed, with other factors, to outcomes. We sense a growing acceptance by many funders that it is not always possible to claim attribution and that convincing evidence of contribution is what we need.

6 Impact map

Individuals and communities

1. Children and young people (CYP) (56%)

Marginalised young people develop improved life skills and wellbeing and/or skills for a more successful future and enhance their employment prospects.



2. Voice and influence (14%)

Actual and potential service users, particularly marginalised people, have increased voice in decisions about services that affect their lives.



3. Continuing professional development (CPD) (37%)

Professionals/practitioners/staff in a range of services and settings improve their practice and the results for the service users they work with, through participation in effective continuing professional development (CPD).



4. Artists' opportunities (18%)

Artists use new opportunities to pursue ideas and develop their work.



5. Arts access (38%)

People have increased access to and/or participate in arts/cultural activity.



6. Community (15%)

Communities are strengthened by the development of stronger relationships between people within the community.

Percentage of Open Grants achieving each outcome. Most had several different outcomes; percentages do not add up to 100.

Organisations

7. User needs (26%)

Organisations change their services in ways that demonstrably respond better to the needs of service users and local communities.

26%

8. Business models (50%)

Organisations develop new business models to enable new work or types of service and/or longer-term sustainability of the organisation and services, to the benefit of their service users.

50%

9. Partnership (32%)

Organisations develop new, formal collaborations, networks and partnerships. Partnership skills are sufficiently developed and embedded in the organisation to enable more effective services for/relationships with users in the future.

32%

Practice and policy

10. Local practice (16%)

Significant numbers of organisations in the relevant sectors in the local area adopt practices, including innovations, shown through PHF-funded work and evaluation to improve outcomes for their service users/target groups/audiences etc.

16%

11. Practice, wide area (28%)

Significant numbers of organisations in the relevant sectors, across a wide geographical area, adopt practices, including innovations, shown through PHF-funded work and evaluation to improve outcomes for their service users/target groups/audiences etc.

28%

13. Policy, wide area (10%)

Politicians and policy makers at national levels develop awareness and understanding of arguments for policy change, based on evidence from PHF-funded work. In some cases, PHF evidence is known to influence a decision to change policy.

10%

14. International (5%)

Policy and/or practice internationally is influenced by the evidence of PHF-funded work.

5%

3%

12. Local policy (3%)

Politicians and policy makers at local levels develop awareness and understanding of arguments for policy change, based on evidence from PHF-funded work. In some cases, PHF evidence is known to influence a decision to change policy.

7 Special Initiatives

Awards for Artists: supports individual artists to develop their creative ideas by providing funding with no strings attached over three years.

Breakthrough Fund: responds to the compelling visions of outstanding ‘cultural entrepreneurs’, offering support to them and their organisations to pursue these visions.

Jane Attenborough Dance in Education fellowships: enabled dance companies to support a dancer coming to the end of his or her career to make a successful transition to education and community work.

Learning Away: supports schools in significantly enhancing young people’s learning, achievement and wellbeing by using innovative residential experiences as an integral part of the curriculum.

Learning Futures: developed and trialled innovative methods of teaching and learning, which aimed to increase students’ engagement with their learning.

Musical Futures: devised new and imaginative ways of engaging 11–19 year olds in meaningful, sustainable music activity.

Right Here: develops new approaches to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of 16–25 year olds.

What Works? Student Retention & Success programme: helps to build understanding about how best to support students once they arrive at university, in what is often a daunting new environment and learning context.

Special Initiatives included in the impact assessment:

AA	Awards for Artists
BF	Breakthrough Fund
JADE	Jane Attenborough Dance in Education Fellowships
LA	Learning Away
LF	Learning Futures
MF	Musical Futures
RH	Right Here
WW	What Works? Student Retention & Success programme

	AA	BF	JADE	LA	LF	MF	RH	WW
Individuals and community								
1. Children and young people (CYP)				●	●	●	●	
2. Voice and influence							●	
3. Continuing professional development (CPD)			●	●	●	●	●	
4. Artists’ opportunities	●	●						
5. Arts access						●		
6. Community				●				
Organisations								
7. User needs							●	
8. Business models		●	●		●			
9. Partnership				●			●	
Practice and policy								
10. Local practice								
11. Practice, wide area			●		●	●		●
12. Local policy							●	
13. Policy, wide area							●	
14. International						●		

8

What is the impact?

The results

Impact on individuals and communities

There were six outcomes for individuals and communities:

1. For marginalised young people, the development of improved wellbeing and skills and enhanced prospects for a successful future

More than half the Open Grants and half the Special Initiatives made a positive change to the wellbeing, learning and life skills of children and young people. This was the most numerous outcome amongst the 14 in the framework. Children and young people achieved eight different types of change, including the acquisition of life skills such as leadership and teamworking, progression in attainment, greater engagement in learning, improved speaking and listening skills and moves into new jobs, training or volunteering.

2. For service users, particularly those who are vulnerable or marginalised, an increased voice in decisions about services that affect their lives

Fourteen per cent of Open Grants, and the Right Here Special Initiative, helped people whose needs and experiences may be poorly understood and little heard by service providers, to have a dialogue with and influence on the providers of services that affect their lives. The young people involved in the projects came from varied backgrounds and experiences, including young people who were: 'NEET'; ex-offenders; from asylum seeker, refugee and migrant backgrounds; young male sex workers; experiencing mental health problems; living with HIV/AIDS; and had learning disabilities.

3. For professionals, practitioners, staff and volunteers, improved practice – as a result of continuing professional development – that improves the services they provide

Thirty seven percent of Open Grants and five Special Initiatives invested in the continuing professional development and training of staff and volunteers. Skill development was a common feature of funded projects' strategies to improve their own services and to spread new practice more widely. Most of the evidence is from participants, reflecting on changes to their skills, confidence and practice, rather than of any resulting improvements to service users' experience.

4. For artists, the development of new work and ideas

Artists pursued their ideas and developed new work as a result of the opportunities provided by 18% of Open Grants. These opportunities were created by projects using the arts in their work with communities, with vulnerable young people in schools, the community and criminal justice settings. Opportunities were also generated by new approaches to public access to or participation in arts activity.

Awards for Artists has supported 40 visual artists and composers since the current scheme started in 2007, providing artists with financial support over three years to give them the freedom to develop their creative ideas and to contribute to their personal and professional growth.

Impact on individuals and communities (cont.)

5. Increased access to and participation in the arts, across many different communities

Thirty eight per cent of Open Grants enabled people to have increased access to and participation in arts/cultural activity. This was achieved in four ways: reaching larger audiences; creating access for people with no previous experience of an art form; enabling participation in new arts experiences; and helping people to develop a longer-term interest in the arts. Grantees ranged from large and internationally renowned cultural venues, to local organisations rooted in communities.

Musical Futures increased pupils' participation in extra-curricular music activity, instrument take-up, and broadening of musical preferences.

6. Within and between communities, stronger relationships and understanding

Fifteen per cent of Open Grants contributed in different ways to better and stronger relationships between and within communities, including between generations. The types of community included: physical residential communities such as housing estates; minority ethnic communities; and geographically dispersed communities of shared experience.

Impact on organisations

There were three outcomes for organisations:

7. Changing their services to respond better to the needs of service users and local communities

Twenty six per cent of Open Grants enabled organisations to develop their services in ways that responded better to the needs of their service users and local communities. The Foundation funds many different types of organisation, providing a wide variety of services. Across the full range, organisations changed their services in order to support categories of people with whom they had not worked previously. Work with young people by the projects under the Right Here initiative has led to new forms of early intervention mental health services.

8. Developing new business models to enable new work or longer-term sustainability of services for those they serve

Fifty per cent of Open Grants and three Special Initiatives contributed to the development of significant organisational change. New business models were often ambitious and innovative, producing service improvements for users and, for some organisations, leading to new or more secure sources of income. Grantees' advances in evaluating their own performance contributed to the sustainability of new business models.

Significant new models of work are emerging from at least 12 of the organisations in which the Breakthrough Fund's 15 cultural entrepreneurs are based.

9. Developing new partnerships and improving partnership skills in order to provide more effective services to their users

Partnership working, as a means of improving services and organisational effectiveness, was developed and significantly strengthened through 32% of Open Grants and two of the Special Initiatives. Grantees led the development of partnership working with other not for profit organisations, in the voluntary and statutory sectors, and occasionally with businesses. Partnerships brought together the different areas of expertise, infrastructure and relationships that were needed to meet various types of shared objectives. Some partnerships involved close cooperation between small numbers of organisations; others were larger, cooperative networks.

Impact on wider policy and practice

Impact on policy and practice, beyond those organisations directly involved in the funded work, took five forms:

10. Local practice

Sixteen per cent of grantees provided some evidence related to the local take-up of practices that had been shown to enable organisations to meet users' needs more effectively. However, most evidence is of dissemination – seminars, talks and presentations – sometimes supplemented by the testimony of people from other organisations that they intend to adopt the new practice or innovation. There is limited reporting of actual change and implementation.

11. Practice across a wider area

Twenty eight per cent of grantees worked towards the spreading of new or enhanced practice across a wide area, most often on a national scale. As with outcome 10, the evidence is mainly of dissemination and interest rather than of actual take-up. For this outcome dissemination is via national rather than local or regional media and conferences draw participants from national networks.

We have indications from different sources of Musical Futures in use in a large proportion of secondary schools in England and spreading through the rest of the UK, though it is not possible to say definitively how many schools are involved.

12. Local policy

13. Policy across a wider area

Three per cent of grantees were active in influencing local policy, using evidence from PHF-funded work about changes needed to improve outcomes for individuals and communities. Ten per cent of grantees were similarly active at the national policy level; these were mainly large, voluntary organisations with a nationwide remit, with greater capacity and experience in policy advocacy than organisations working at local level. As with practice change (outcomes 10 and 11) the majority of the evidence here is of policy advocacy (through various forms of engagement with policy makers) rather than of decisions to amend, create or abolish a policy.

14. International policy and practice

Somewhat to our surprise, there is evidence of influence on practice and policy in other countries. Five per cent of grantees – all arts organisations – attracted the interest of peers overseas, who visited to learn more about new approaches or invited grantees' staff to speak at international meetings overseas.

Musical Futures was introduced in Australia with funding from a US-based charitable foundation and the support of education departments in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales.

9 Meeting PHF's strategic aims?

One of our objectives was to discover how patterns of impact matched up to the Foundation's strategic aims.

The first three strategic aims set out the Foundation's intention to make a difference, directly, to people's lives. Through developing the impact framework, we identified six outcomes for individuals and communities, which contribute to the aims as follows:

Strategic aim one: Enabling people to experience and enjoy the arts

Funding has increased both access to and participation in arts and cultural activity by a wide range of people (outcome 5). Artists taking up new opportunities (outcome 4) have contributed to this, as has continuing professional development for artists working in participatory settings (outcome 3b).

Strategic aim two: Developing people's education and learning

Funding has had an impact on the education of both children and young people (outcomes 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f) and of adults (outcome 3). Continuing professional development for teachers and others in educational settings (3c) has enhanced their practice, for the benefit of students' learning.

Strategic aim three: Integrating marginalised young people who are at times of transition

The outcomes for marginalised young people included the development of a wide range of skills and attributes to enhance their future prospects and wellbeing (1a, 1g, 1h). Marginalised young people were supported to make their needs and experiences known to service providers whose decisions affect their lives (outcome 2). Within communities, some marginalised young people developed new or stronger relationships with others of the same age group and across generations (outcome 6). Continuing professional development for different groups working with young people has provided opportunities to improve their practice, for the young people they work with (outcome 3).

Strategic aim five²: Developing the capacity of organisations and people who facilitate our strategic aims

All the types of change that have contributed to the first three strategic aims have been facilitated by and made more sustainable by investment in individuals and organisations.

As noted above, many people in different settings have taken part in training and continuing professional development (outcome 3) and artists have had new opportunities to develop their work (outcome 4).

Organisations have changed too, by responding more effectively to groups with whom they previously had little contact or whose needs were poorly served (outcome 7). New business models have been developed, many of them securing the funding to sustain their work (outcome 8). New and stronger partnerships between organisations and improved partnership skills have been developed (outcome 9).

2. Strategic aims four and six are not intended to be achieved through grant-making

10 Reflections and next steps

The classification of the outcomes of PHF-funded work and the ‘impact map’ will inform PHF’s thinking about policy and planning for the future, particularly when the Foundation begins to consider the directions it wishes to take during the period of its next strategic plan.

The results prompt thinking about further lines of enquiry and suggest questions for discussion, at both strategic and operational levels. They have identified that we need to act on evidence quality and utility. They also provide a baseline, against which we can examine future trends and changing patterns.

Strategic aims

At the strategic level, the results reveal the ways in which funded work is contributing to the strategic aims that the Foundation set itself for 2006–13. They suggest a number of questions for consideration as we move forward from here, including:

- Are there gaps in the framework? What desirable or intended outcomes are missing or are less numerous than we would like? If there are such gaps in the map of actual outcomes, how does our funding strategy need to change?
- Are some of our intended or actual outcomes more important than others? Which might be future priorities and how do we fund to achieve them?
- Are the outcomes for organisations the ones we want to see? Are there other outcomes that we should seek to encourage? Do different types of organisations have different needs?
- How important is it for the Foundation to try to bring about change by influencing wider practice and policy? What can we learn from where this has happened successfully? What could the Foundation do to be more effective in this area and enable grantees to have more influence?
- Are there particularly effective approaches, in different contexts, to linking organisational development and/or influence on wider practice and policy to greater benefit for individuals and communities? If so, how can we fund to optimise this?

Working on the evidence

Our findings about the quality and utility of grantees’ evidence underline the importance of finding ways to make evaluation in our sectors more effective. PHF will continue to work with others by participating in the different networks and initiatives that are concerned with improving evidence and impact reporting.

In 2013 our second round of grantee perception research will provide further feedback to PHF about grantees’ experiences of working with us and insight into where we might usefully change the focus of our resources or inputs. It is clear that some grantees, though not all, many need encouragement or support to raise the overall standards of evidence they have about their own work. In addition, PHF will be particularly interested in exploring with grantees ways to follow outcomes over longer periods of time.

The Foundation has recently introduced a ‘relationship agreement’ to make clear how we hope to work with grantees – what we can offer to grantees and what we expect. We have also reviewed and re-issued our reporting guidelines for grantees. As we investigate and consult further, it may be that we conclude that a more tailored approach would be appropriate, with some organisations requiring more or different types of support from PHF and different types of activity requiring more or less depth of reporting.

Our approach to evaluating the Special Initiatives continues to develop as, collectively across the different initiatives, we learn and understand more about how to carry out evaluation that is helpful in shaping and steering the work in progress and about how to capture and use evidence of outcomes.

Future use of the framework

We will use the framework to track the outcomes of PHF-funded work, at least for the remainder of the current strategic planning period. Beyond that, our approach to assessing impact will be developed, as necessary, to support the aims of the next strategic plan. This will itself be informed by the impact map and results reported here, which also provide a baseline against which to examine any trends and changes.

We hope the framework will not be seen by potential grantees as PHF's shopping list of outcomes or as a menu from which applicants should select objectives to propose to us. It is not intended to be a set of criteria for trustees' decisions about whether or not to approve applications for funding.

We remain open to all proposals for new activities that meet our aims and funding guidelines, which have not changed. Some new grants may achieve outcomes that fall outside the current framework, which has been built on evidence of outcomes to date. As and when we identify new outcome categories from the evidence of change reported to us, we will amend the framework to include them.

Making further use of the data

In this report we have presented the results at the upper level of the framework, the 14 main outcomes, and for PHF funding as a whole. But it is also possible to produce further types of analysis, to inform our thinking and next steps in other ways, which include:

- Producing separate impact maps for the work funded by each of the three UK programmes (arts, education and learning, social justice), to inform work and planning by programme committees and staff
- Producing a more detailed impact map, at the lower (sub-outcome) level of the framework, to reveal how many Open Grants and Special Initiatives are contributing to each of the 37 more specific types of change
- Bringing the numbers to life by describing and analysing the different approaches taken to achieving each outcome or sub-outcome, linking this to illustrative vignettes or case studies
- Facilitating information exchange and learning between grantees and Special Initiatives within each outcome or sub-outcome group.

This report has also given an overview of our findings about the evidence. We can use the data to guide our next steps in helping grantees to generate more useful data by:

- Examining any differences in evidence quality and utility between different outcomes or sub-outcomes and/or between different types of grantee organisation or sector. This can inform our decisions about where to focus efforts and resources in development work with grantees.

Further information

We hope this report will be of interest to the many others, both grantees and funders, interested in assessing the outcomes and impact of the types of work funded by foundations and other grant-makers. Please get in touch with any thoughts, suggestions or questions about the approach we have described in this report, which is very much 'work in progress'.

Further information about it is available on our website www.phf.org.uk

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