Assessing the Impact of Bringing Arts into Neighbourhoods
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All quotes presented are taken from the
focus group discussions or interviews with
local artists and event organisers and
paraphrased for the purpose of this guide,
with the written consent obtained from
each participant.

About this Guide

This guide is an evaluation framework developed to support the assessment of short and long-term impacts of arts projects, events, and initiatives on neighbourhoods, public life, and communities. It is designed to help document and better facilitate creative efforts to bring quality arts close to where people live, work, and play.

The content presented in this guide represents the synthesis of a study conducted at selected Arts and Culture Nodes. The Arts and Culture Nodes initiative, launched by the National Arts Council in 2012, establishes an island-wide network of arts touch-points within neighbourhoods to provide all Singaporeans with greater access to quality arts, bring vibrancy and stronger identity to public spaces, and increase opportunities for community participation and bonding through the arts.

Such touch-points go beyond formal arts venues (typically found in the city centre) and involve partnerships with various institutions such as libraries, government agencies, civic centres, community and recreational clubs and corporate organisations that play a key role in their respective neighbourhood.

Arts and Culture Nodes As of May 2019
The island-wide network of arts touch-points within neighbourhoods will continue to evolve.

For a current listing, click here.1

1. Companion Guide:
To be used collectively or independently, click to download.
Key Components: Impact Assessment Framework

Domains, dimensions and indicators are the key components of a holistic framework proposed to capture, measure and evaluate critical attributes (conditions) and impacts of arts and cultural venues and activities. The framework takes into account diverse inputs from different stakeholders – residents, event organisers, artists and various agencies.

Environmental and economic impacts are also important, but they are not covered in framework.

* Environmental and economic impacts are also important, but they are not covered in framework.
Six Steps to Start Your Evaluation

1. Identify Your Goals, Visions and Interest
   - What are your goals in implementing (organising or performing) arts and cultural activities in the neighbourhood?
   - What kind of arts and cultural activities do you intend to implement?
   - What spaces do you intend to activate for this purpose?
   - Who are your targeted audiences?
   - Are your arts and cultural activities short or long term?
   - What kind of impacts do you hope to make in both the short and long run (e.g. in 1, 5 or 10 years)?

2. Prioritise Your Impact Assessment Criteria
   - Which specific impact measurement areas are most important to your arts and cultural activities?
     - Refer to the ‘Impact Assessment Framework’ on pg. 4-5 for the indicators.
   - Cover as many indicators as possible to ensure a robust and consistent set of data for future comparison.

3. Identify Your Resources and Capabilities to Conduct Evaluation
   - Choose the most suitable tools to measure the selected impacts, bearing in mind potentially limited space, time, manpower or financial resources.
     - Refer to the ‘Tools and Techniques’ section on pg. 37.
   - Evaluate spaces and impacts beyond your premises (if any), e.g. within a 400m radius from your key arts and cultural venue.

4. Conduct Your Assessment
   - Assess the impacts of all your arts and cultural activities.

5. Analyse Your Findings
   - What are the strengths and weaknesses of your arts and cultural activities?
   - Identify impacts that may still be lacking.
   - The most fruitful results will be generated after continuous impact assessment over a longer period.

6. Reflect and Move Forward
   - Reflect on your goals and achievements. Identify gaps, challenges and set actions to improve your arts and cultural activities.
     - Refer to the ‘Principles to Boost Positive Impacts’ section on pg. 47 for an indication on how to move forward.
   - Reflect on impact assessment methods and tools. Are there any specific challenges? Refine the tools to overcome these challenges.
Indicators for Impact Assessment

DIMENSION
Space

Space refers to spatial and physical characteristics of arts and cultural venues; involving aspects of size, accessibility, visibility, comfort and flexibility, among others.

Overall quality of space can considerably influence the type, volume, intensity and frequency of arts and cultural activities. Arts initiatives can capitalise on the availability of good quality spaces, match the type of events, while benefiting from the ways people utilise the space everyday.

INDICATOR 1
Availability and Utilisation of Space for Arts and Cultural Activities

INDICATOR 2
Suitability of Spaces for Arts and Cultural Activities

INDICATOR 3
Accessibility to Arts and Cultural Activities
Availability and Utilisation of Space for Arts and Cultural Activities

**Measurement**

- Amount and diversity of available spaces utilised, e.g.
  - Number of:
    - Indoor spaces (available vs. utilised)
    - Outdoor spaces (available vs. utilised)
    - Spaces beyond Arts and Culture Node partner’s premises (available vs. utilised)
    - Spaces in the neighbourhood used by others for arts and cultural activities
  - Frequency of space utilisation for the arts, e.g.
    - Number of:
      - Spaces utilised regularly
      - Spaces utilised occasionally

**Why this indicator?**

Good utilisation of available spaces, reflects the spatial capacity of node partners and other event organisers to establish a strong arts and cultural ecology in the neighbourhood. Extensive and frequent use of available spaces for arts and cultural activities, increases exposure to the arts in neighbourhoods.

**How to Measure?**

- On-site Observations of potential venues and arts and cultural activities in the neighbourhood
- Interviews with event organisers, local institutions (schools, residents’ committees, etc.), artists and residents

**Questions to Explore**

**For event organisers**
- How many spaces have you successfully activated within your neighbourhood? What types of spaces? How frequently?
- Have you considered collaborations with other institutions, e.g. schools, shopping malls?
- How many people can associate the spaces you activated with the arts?

**For artists**
- Which spaces have you performed at in this neighbourhood?

**Things to note**
- Take special note of other arts and cultural activities in the neighbourhood to improve your own.

Suitability of Spaces for Arts and Cultural Activities

**Measurement**

- Number (or %) of participants who agree that the venue is suitable for arts and cultural activities; or average perceived ‘Suitability Score’
  
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<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
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- Size or scale of space (sqm, number of seats and standing participants)
- Suitability level
  - Refer to companion guide, Checklists for Neighbourhood Space Evaluation on pg. 40.

**Why this indicator?**

Suitable spaces provide better arts experience and are likely to draw participants back for future arts and cultural activities. Good arts experience can affect participants’ overall mood, perception of place vibrancy and appreciation of and attachment to place and community.

**How to Measure?**

- On-site Observations
- Interviews with event organisers and artists
- Event Surveys with participants
- Focus Group Discussions with event organisers, artists and residents

**Questions to Explore**

**For event organisers**
- Is there necessary infrastructure to support your work?
- What are the key challenges and advantages in organising arts and cultural activities in informal venues?

**For artists**
- Is the space conducive for your type of arts and cultural activity?

**For participants**
- How suitable is this venue for arts and cultural activities? Why?

**Things to note**

- While surveys are useful to collect quantitative data from participants, FGDs and interviews with event organisers, artists and residents can provide qualitative insights on the suitability of spaces.
- Perception of space suitability varies among types of activities (workshop vs. performance), participants (incidental vs. intentional ‘art lovers’) and stakeholders (event organisers vs. artists vs. participants).

The community centre hall is sheltered, so we don’t have to worry about the weather, and there’s air-conditioning. Whether rain or shine, it is still conducive for an arts performance.

~ Participant
**Dimension: Space**

**Programme**

Programme dimension refers to arts and cultural activities offered in a space. It describes how a space functions and how people interact with space, arts and the other participants.

How a space functions is typically understood through whether it is designed and used for specific activities – how many activities, what types of activities, for how long (intensity) and by whom.

Perception of spaces is shaped not only by their design characteristics (e.g. aesthetic quality, comfort, safety, identity), but also by the activities, social and emotional bonds, sense of belonging and symbolic values people bring and attach to spaces.

## Attributes (Conditions)

### Why this indicator?

Accessibility and convenience are correlated with the probability to attend arts and cultural activities and build repeat participants, especially the elderly.

### How to Measure?

- **On-site Observations**
- **Event Surveys**
- **Focus Group Discussions with residents**

### Questions to Explore

**For event organisers**

- Is it easy to access this venue by public transport?
- Is the space accessible for wheelchair users, the elderly and small children?

**For residents**

- Do you stay or work in this neighbourhood? How far away do you stay or work from this venue? What is your postal code?
- How likely are you to participate in an arts and cultural activity near your home or workplace?

### Things to note

- Accessibility also refers to wheelchair access, entrance or attendance fee, or availability of adjacent amenities (which may incentivise the participants to combine attendance with other activities, such as shopping, dining or meeting friends).

Refer to companion guide, Checklists for Neighbourhood Space Evaluation on pg. 40.

**I prefer events to be held in the neighbourhood rather than somewhere central. If arts events happen after dinner time and close to eateries, it is very easy and convenient to attend. I don’t really have a lot of time to bring my kids somewhere central.**

– Participant

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**Accessibility to Arts and Cultural Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Number (or %) of participants living or working close to venue (e.g. walking distance: 400m–5mins, 1km–10mins)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Number (or %) of participants who favour venues close to home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Number of public transport stations (bus, MRT, LRT, etc.) close to venue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Why this indicator?**

Accessibility and convenience are correlated with the probability to attend arts and cultural activities and build repeat participants, especially the elderly.
**Availability of Arts and Cultural Activities**

**Measurement**
- Number, diversity and frequency of arts and cultural activities offered in the neighbourhood, e.g.
- Number of activities available, e.g. performances, workshops (or yours vs. others)
- Frequency of activities, e.g. weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly (yours vs. others)

**How to Measure?**
- On-site Observations
- Interviews with event organisers, artists and participants

**Questions to Explore**
For event organisers
- How many arts and cultural activities do you offer in this neighbourhood?
- Are they different? Do they cater to different target audiences?
- How frequently do you organise arts and cultural activities at this venue?
- Are there other arts and cultural activities in the neighbourhood that are organised by other parties?
- Are the residents vocal in requesting certain arts and cultural activities?

**Things to note**
- Pay attention to arts and cultural activities by other institutions or organisations, to differentiate yours while embracing the diversity and variety of others available.
- Types of arts and cultural activities are often (but not necessarily) linked to their scale. For instance, workshops are usually conceived as small-scale and intimate activities compared to music concerts and dance performances.

**Level of Engagement and Enjoyment of Arts and Cultural Activities**

**Measurement**
- Number (or %) of participants who find the activity captivating, emotionally or intellectually engaging; or average ‘Engagement Score’
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Very Poor</th>
<th>2 Poor</th>
<th>3 Average</th>
<th>4 Good</th>
<th>5 Excellent</th>
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</table>

- Number (or %) of participants who find the activity enjoyable; or average ‘Enjoyment Score’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Very Poor</th>
<th>2 Poor</th>
<th>3 Average</th>
<th>4 Good</th>
<th>5 Excellent</th>
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</thead>
</table>

**How to Measure?**
- On-site Observations
- Event Surveys
- Focus Group Discussions with residents

**Why this indicator?**
More arts and cultural activities means more regular arts engagement for the residents.
Regular engagement with the arts may deepen participation and bring stronger character to the neighbourhood.
Greater diversity of arts and cultural activities can attract diverse participants and provide opportunities for bonding.

**Why this indicator?**
A higher score on the level of engagement and enjoyment intuitively reflects more engaged and involved participants.
The level of engagement and enjoyment also contributes to the perception and understanding of the quality of arts.

**Questions to Explore**
For participants
- How engaging was this arts and cultural activity?
- Which parts of the performance captured your attention the most?
- How enjoyable was this activity?

**Things to note**
- The term ‘engaging’ is used here in contrast with ‘boring’ and should not be confused with active community participation. For instance, an activity is engaging if its content and format can animate the participants or if the artists have meaningful exchanges with the participants through their performance.
- While surveys are useful to collect quantitative data, FGDs with participants would provide insightful information on the level of engagement and enjoyment, which may contribute to improving the quality of activities in the future.
Overall Quality of Arts and Cultural Activities

**Measurement**

- Number (or %) of participants who rate the quality of activity as 'good' and 'excellent'; or average 'Quality Score'

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How to Measure?**

- Interviews with event organisers and artists
- Event Surveys
- Focus Group Discussions with residents

**Questions to Explore**

For event organisers & artists
- What was your most successful arts and cultural activity?

For participants
- How do you find the overall quality of this activity? Why?
- What did you enjoy most about this activity?
- Was there an entrance fee or pre-registration required to attend this activity?
- Will you recommend others to attend arts and cultural activities at this venue?

**Things to note**

- Perception of the quality of activities varies among different participants (e.g. elderly, family with kids, incidental participants or 'arts-lovers'). It is also highly influenced by factors such as entrance fees, venue, content, involvement of established artists, or relationship with artists or event organisers, amongst others.
- While surveys are useful to collect quantitative data, FGDs with participants would provide qualitative insights about how they really feel about the quality of an activity, which may contribute to the improvement of future activities.
- Interviews with artists and event organisers are also useful, as they may know how their artworks and activities were appreciated in the past.

Why this indicator?

- The more is known about how much the public appreciates an arts and cultural activity, the greater the opportunities for artists to improve or customise their creative efforts.

The overall quality of an arts and cultural activity is correlated with the size, capacity and comfort of participants' area. It is also moderately correlated with the level of engagement and enjoyment, positive emotions, place vibrancy, sense of pride to the community, appreciation of other cultures, attachment to community, and the pursuit of other arts-related activities.

Involvement of Established Artists

**Measurement**

- Number (or %) of arts and cultural activities that involved established artists
- Number of established artists involved in arts and cultural activities

**How to Measure?**

- On-site Observations
- Interviews with event organisers and artists

**Questions to Explore**

For participants
- Were established artists involved in this performance? How many of them?
- Did the involvement of established artists contribute to your perception of the overall quality of the activity? How?

**Things to note**

- Involving established artists who have experience performing at informal venues and for transient crowds, or are equipped with community engagement skills and techniques can significantly contribute to overall success of arts activities.
- Well-known and established artists, will attract mixed participants, e.g. both 'arts-lovers' and incidental participants.
Impacts of arts and cultural activities can only be generated through arts appreciation – attendance and participation. Knowing the volume and the profile of participants can substantially contribute to better planning of arts and cultural activities that are participants- and context-sensitive.

**Volume and Profile of Participants**

**Measurement**
- Number (or %) of:
  - Participants in an arts and cultural activity
  - Different participants (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, work profile)
  - Number of participants in relation to area capacity (e.g. number per sqm)

**How to Measure?**
- On-site Observations by counting participants
- Event Surveys

**Questions to Explore**
For event organisers:
- How many participants attended the arts and cultural activity?
- Can you estimate their profile (age, ethnicity, gender, etc.)?
- Was the venue full or empty?
- Did the activity require pre-registration and small number of participants?
- Who are the most frequent participants of your activities?
- How would you describe your typical participants?

**Things to note**
- Analyse the volume of participants in consideration with other factors – such as type, venue, time and duration of activity, etc.
- The absolute number of participants does not necessarily indicate the quality or success of an activity. Some activities such as workshops, may have restricted number of participants due to spatial requirements or facilitation techniques.
- Observe if the venue capacity is fully reached.

**Why this indicator?**
Volume of participants can influence the perception of suitability of an arts and cultural venue, be it empty or overcrowded. Crowd usually attracts more crowd. Details about the participants can provide insights for customising future activities to reach out to specific target audiences.
**Reason for Attending Arts and Cultural Activities**

**Measurement**
- Number (or %) of:
  - Incidental participants (passers-by) of arts and cultural activities
  - Intentional participants of arts and cultural activities
  - Participants who heard about the activity from specific publicity channels

**Why this indicator?**
- Identifying first-time and repeat participants is useful for tailoring future programmes.
- Number of repeat participants strongly correlates with frequency of arts and cultural activities. Repeat participants tend to communicate more with other participants, show stronger desire to participate in future activities and report higher positive impacts on mood, sense of well-being and appreciation of other cultures.

**How to Measure?**
- Event Surveys
- Focus Group Discussions with residents

**Questions to Explore**
- For participants
  - Why did you attend this arts and cultural activity?
  - How did you get information about this arts and cultural activity?

**Things to note**
- Analyse reasons for attendance in consideration with factors such as type, venue, time and duration of activity, publicity channels, etc.
- Performances which are typically held in accessible outdoor spaces and do not require pre-registration often attract incidental participants.

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**Frequency of Participation**

**Measurement**
- Number (or %) of:
  - First-time participants who attended any arts and cultural activities in Singapore, in the last 12 months
  - First-time participants who attended at least one arts and cultural activity in the neighbourhood
  - Repeat participants of arts and cultural activity

**Why this indicator?**
- Analyse the frequency of participants in consideration with factors such as type, venue, time and duration of activity, etc.
- Repeat participants are likely to be found in neighbourhood arts and cultural activities on a more frequent basis.

**How to Measure?**
- Event Surveys
- Focus Group Discussions with residents

**Questions to Explore**
- For participants
  - Have you attended any arts and cultural activity in Singapore, in the last 12 months?
  - Have you attended any arts and cultural activity in your neighbourhood before?
  - Have you attended any arts and cultural activity at this venue before?
  - How often do you attend arts and cultural activities?

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*Note the page numbers are not consecutive.*
Activation of Space

Arts can be a powerful medium to enliven everyday spaces. As an integral part of creative placemaking, arts and cultural strategies help to reveal and enhance the underlying identity, value and character of the physical space, bring vibrancy to everyday public life and shape the social form of a community.\(^2\)

**Indicator 11: Arts and Space Vibrancy\(^3\)**

**Measurement**

- Number (or %) of participants who feel that neighbourhood spaces are more vibrant because of arts and cultural activities; or average perceived ‘Vibrancy Score’

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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- Number of residents using temporary features (seats, tables, stage, etc.) at the venue before and after the activity

**How to Measure?**

- On-site Observations
- Event Surveys
- Focus Group Discussions with residents

**Questions to Explore**

For participants
- Does this space feel more lively and vibrant due to this arts and cultural activity?
- Does the space look festive, e.g. different than on typical days without any activity?

For event organisers
- Were there people gathering at the venue before the activity started?
- Did people stay to socialise after the activity?
- Is it important to you that the activity reflects the heritage of the community? Why?

**Things to note**

- Analyse vibrancy in consideration with factors such as types and frequency of arts and cultural activities, types of venue (e.g. indoor vs. outdoor), etc.

- Observe the usage of venue before, during and after an activity. Temporary physical changes (chairs, tables, stage, decoration, etc.) to space can create a festive atmosphere and contribute to informal social interaction beyond the duration of the activity.

- Frequency and regularity of activities can bring stronger presence of arts in the neighbourhood and association of certain spaces with arts and cultural activities.

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**It was actually the music that attracted me to this place. I was going home and realised it was live and thought it was quite cool. It makes the whole place more lively, I feel.**

- Participant
## Social Impacts

Social impacts of arts and cultural participation can take various forms at different levels.

On an interpersonal level, arts experiences deliver social impacts in the form of family cohesion, expanded social networks and an enhanced ability to empathise with others.

At the community level, social bonding that can result from arts experiences may promote sense of belonging, or pride of one’s community, defined by geography or specific groups of people.

### Indicator 12

**Enhancing Existing Social Network**

- **Measurement**
  - Number (or %) of:
    - Participants who came with others (e.g. family members, friends, neighbours, co-workers)
    - Participants who spoke to people they already knew (acquaintances)

- **How to Measure?**
  - Interviews with event organisers and artists
  - Event Surveys
  - Focus Group Discussions with residents

- **Questions to Explore**
  - For event organisers
    - Are people attending the arts and cultural activity in groups?
  - For participants
    - Who did you attend this arts and cultural activity with?
    - Did you communicate with people at this arts and cultural activity, other than those you came with?

- **Why this indicator?**
  - This indicator is important for understanding the capacities of arts and cultural activities to provide opportunities, for both intended and incidental social interaction and generate positive impacts on community bonding.

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**Things to note**

- Analyse the existing social bonds with factors such as type and venue of activity, type of participants, etc.

- Enriching social networks involves not only the residents, but also event organisers, artists and amateur arts groups.

- Different groups of participants may experience this impact differently, e.g. first-time vs. repeat, incidental vs. intentional, individual vs. group.

- Communication with others is correlated with participants’ mood and well-being, appreciation of other cultures, attachment to neighbourhood and pursuing other activities. Group participants have more social interaction during the activities than solo participants and are also statistically significantly younger in comparison.

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**Event Surveys**

**Focus Group Discussions**

**Interviews**

**Art events give a reason for family to head out, rather than staying in to watch television or use our personal devices.**

– Participant
Building New Social Network

**About this indicator:**
Analyse development of new social bonds with factors such as:

- Type and venue of activity, type of participants, etc.
- Enriching social networks involves not only the residents, but also event organisers, artists and amateur arts groups.
- Different groups of participants may experience this impact differently, e.g., first-time vs. repeat, incidental vs. intentional, individual vs. group.
- Making new friends is correlated with intentional and repeat participants.
- New social networks tend to be built more easily in informal venues.

**Questions to Explore**

- **For participants**
  - Did you meet new people at this arts and cultural activity?
  - Did you make new friends after attending an arts and cultural activity?

**How to Measure?**

- **Interviews**
- **Event Surveys**
- **Focus Group Discussions**

**Why this indicator?**
Making new friends among neighbours is acknowledged as a highly advanced stage in the process of community bonding.

Sense of Attachment to the Neighbourhood

**About this indicator:**
Arts and cultural activities can boost the sense of attachment to neighbourhoods, through developing spaces into shared activity places for communities to linger and enjoy.

**Questions to Explore**

- **For residents**
  - Do you feel more attached to your neighbourhood because of existing arts and cultural activities?

**How to Measure?**

- **Event Surveys**
- **Focus Group Discussions**

**Why this indicator?**
Making new friends among neighbours is acknowledged as a highly advanced stage in the process of community bonding.

**Things to note**

- Analyse development of new social bonds with factors such as:
  - Type and venue of activity, type of participants, etc.
- Enriching social networks involves not only the residents, but also event organisers, artists and amateur arts groups.
- Different groups of participants may experience this impact differently, e.g., first-time vs. repeat, incidental vs. intentional, individual vs. group.
- Making new friends is correlated with intentional and repeat participants.
- New social networks tend to be built more easily in informal venues.
Understanding and Appreciation of Different Cultures and Lifestyles

**Why this indicator?**
Arts and cultural activities can boost the sense of pride in community, especially when the activities involve context-specific issues that are relevant to that community.

**Measurement**
- Number (or %) of participants who felt that their understanding and appreciation of different cultures and lifestyles improved after attending arts and cultural activities; or average perceived ‘Culture Appreciation Score’

**How to Measure?**
- Event Surveys
- Focus Group Discussions with residents

**Questions to Explore**
For event organisers
- Are the participants diverse in terms of ethnicity, age and gender?
- Do the members of different ethnic or age groups interact?

For participants
- Did attending this arts and cultural activity improve your understanding and appreciation of other cultures?

**Things to note**
- Analyse appreciation of other cultures within the neighbourhood and community with factors such as type and venue of activities, participant’s profile (age, gender, ethnicity), etc.
- Different groups of participants may experience this impact differently, e.g. first-time vs. repeat, incidental vs. intentional, individual vs. group.

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Sense of Pride to the Community

**Why this indicator?**
Arts and cultural activities can boost the sense of pride in community, especially when the activities involve co-creation and showcasing community members’ creative talents can also result in a stronger identification with community or collective sense of achievement.

**Measurement**
- Number (or %) of participants who felt more positive about their community after attending arts and cultural activities; or average perceived ‘Community Pride Score’

**How to Measure?**
- Event Surveys
- Focus Group Discussions with residents

**Questions to Explore**
For participants
- After attending this arts and cultural activity, do you feel more positive about the community you live in?
- Do you know any of the performers at this arts and cultural activity?

**Things to note**
- Analyse pride in community with factors such as type and venue of activity, type of participants, etc.
- Different groups of participants may experience this impact differently, e.g. first-time vs. repeat, incidental vs. intentional, individual vs. group.
- Supporting family members or friends performing at arts and cultural activity and celebrating particular cultural activity are some of the most obvious ‘pride triggers’.

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**I only know about some Chinese arts. I don’t know much about the arts from other ethnicities or countries. By listening to their songs or watching the dance, we can understand more about their cultures, even though we don’t know the language.**

– Participant
Studies show that individuals who spectate, organise arts and cultural activities or co-create art tend to learn new skills and knowledge in more enjoyable ways. They also demonstrate greater creativity, improved communication, planning, organisational, analytical and problem-solving skills.

Moreover, many studies indicate that engagement in arts and cultural activities can improve overall school performance, including subjects other than arts.

**Dimension: Educational Impacts**

**Indicator 17**
**Gaining New Knowledge and Learning New Skills**

The extent of educational impacts may vary due to factors such as type of activities, age of participants, etc.

Additional in-depth study is needed to get insights into educational impacts of participation in arts activities. Event surveys and FGDs only provide ways to gain self-reported information that is indicative at best.
**DIMENSION**

**Well-Being Impacts**

There is a growing body of literature reflecting the relationship between engagement in arts and overall sense of well-being, including positive mental well-being.\(^2\)

Engagement with artistic activities can positively influence one’s mood, emotions, and other psychological states, reduce stress and depression and alleviate the burden of chronic disease.\(^4\)

**INDICATOR 18**

**Positive Impacts on Mood and Health**

**Measurement**

- Number (or %) of participants who reported that they felt healthier and happier after attending arts and cultural activities; or average perceived ‘Good Mood Score’

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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**How to Measure?**

- Event Surveys
- Focus Group Discussions with residents

**Questions to Explore**

For participants

- Did your mood improve after attending this arts and cultural activity? How?
- Describe your emotions after attending this arts and cultural activity?
- Do you think arts and cultural activities have any health benefits?

**Things to note**

- The extent of well-being impacts may vary due to factors such as type of activities, age of the participants, etc.

- Additional in-depth study is needed to get insights into well-being impacts of participation in arts activities. Event surveys and FGDs only provide ways to gain self-reported data that is indicative and anecdotal at best.

**Why this indicator?**

Positive moods from attending arts and cultural activities are associated with higher appreciation of space, people and the arts.

---

*Any form of event will kind of generate a certain interest and I think this interest is very important, because it’s true when you say we live a very mundane life, a lot of people say ‘Singaporeans got no life, we are not happy’, so this brings the life back to us.*

– Participant
Besides the various impacts that arts and cultural activities can bring to neighbourhoods, the arts can benefit from its exposure to the wider public. Such benefits may include growing interest among residents in the arts, increased visits to dedicated and non-dedicated arts and cultural venues, pursuing creative hobbies and establishing arts interest groups, among other gains. Moreover, the participants may also seek a more active role in arts participation, as a co-creator, performer, volunteer or organiser.

**Stronger Interest in Arts and Cultural Activities**

- **Measurement**
  - Number (or %) of participants who reported that they would attend future arts and cultural activities; or average perceived 'Future Attendance Score'
  - Number (or %) of participants who indicated interest in participating in other arts-related activities (artistic hobbies, joining an arts-interest group, enrolling in arts courses, etc.) after attending an arts and cultural activity; or average perceived 'Arts Interest Score'

- **Questions to Explore**
  - For participants
    - Will you attend future arts and cultural activities in this neighbourhood?
    - Do you participate in any arts and cultural activity (e.g. attending an arts course, hobby)? What kind? Where? How often?
    - Would you start attending arts and cultural activities regularly after participating in this activity?

- **Things to note**
  - Analyse deeper interest in arts with factors such as types of activities and participants, level of participation, etc.
  - Different groups of participants may experience this impact differently, e.g. first-time vs. repeated, incidental vs. intentional, individual vs. group.

**Why this indicator?**

Motivating the residents to pursue further creative activities (such as developing arts hobbies, joining an arts course or arts interest club) is critical for building a neighbourhood arts ecology.

Strong interest in the arts is correlated with the type of activities and social interaction with other participants. It is also moderately correlated with space suitability and quality of activities.
Active Participation in Arts and Cultural Activities

**Measurement**

- Number (or %) of:
  - Arts and cultural activities that offer higher level of community engagement (e.g. curation, contribution, co-creation)
  - Participants who would like to play an active role (e.g. volunteer, organiser, teacher, performer) in future arts and cultural activities in the neighbourhood
- Number of:
  - Community members involved in arts and cultural activities
  - Arts interest groups and arts courses available in the neighbourhood

**Questions to Explore**

For event organisers

- How many people are typically involved in organising an arts and cultural activity and what are their roles (e.g. organisers, collaborators, volunteers, paid staff, participants)?
- How many arts interest groups are there in this neighbourhood?
- What mechanisms do you employ to attract and retain volunteers?

For artists

- Have you been trained in any community participation skills? How? What are your approaches to engage the participants?

For participants

- Have you ever been involved in any arts-related volunteering in your neighbourhood? Where and how?

**Why this indicator?**

Encouraging residents to pursue further creative activities (such as developing arts hobbies, joining an arts course or arts interest club) is critical for building neighbourhood arts ecology.

Active participation in arts and cultural activities is correlated with intentional and repeat participation, strong social interaction and attachment to the neighbourhood.

**Tools and Techniques**

1. **On-site Observation**
2. **Interview**
3. **Event Survey**
4. **Focus Group Discussion**

**I am just volunteering as a logistics person. I don’t want to be at the forefront.**

– Participant

**Things to note**

- Analyse deeper interest in the arts with factors such as types of activities and participants, level of participation, etc.
- Different groups of participants may experience this impact differently, e.g. first-time vs. repeated, incidental vs. intentional, individual vs. group.
**On-site Observation**

Use this tool or technique when you want to observe and evaluate spaces, people’s behaviour or activities, e.g.:

- Activity attendance (number and profile of participants)
- Photo-document the activities and temporary features brought to the venue (e.g. seats, advertisement panels, shelter, decoration)
- Change in residents’ behaviour and use of venue before, during and after the activity
- Number and duration of passers-by joining the activity
- Intensity of use of amenities adjacent to venue
- Evaluate space suitability
  - Refer to companion guide, Checklists for Neighbourhood Space Evaluation on pg. 40.
- Number and type of other spaces in the neighbourhood used for arts and cultural activities
- Frequency of other arts and cultural activities in the neighbourhood

**Materials Needed**

- Pen & paper
- Digital video- & audio-recording device
- Camera
- Neighbourhood plan

**Process**

**Step 1**
Understand the purpose of observation.
Why do you need to observe? What to observe? How can you make use of the observation results? Prepare materials needed.

**Step 2**
Go and observe.

**Step 3**
Analyse, review and report your findings to your team.

**Tips**
- Make every effort to blend into the background.
- Take on the role of an objective bystander.
- Look at the situation from several vantage points.
- Observe in pairs; two pairs of eyes are better than one.
- Employ ‘snap-shot’ method to count and observe for a short period of time (3-5mins) at different time slots (before, during and after activity); this allows for parallel observations by one person and provides more holistic insights.

**Interview**

Use this tool or technique when you want to gather in-depth information about arts spaces and activities in the neighbourhood from the artists’ and event organisers’ perspectives, e.g.:

- Key spatial requirements considered when choosing the venues for arts and cultural activities in the neighbourhood
- Spaces utilised in the past for arts and cultural activities
- Details of arts and cultural activities offered
- Presence and support of arts interest groups
- Number and nature of volunteerism
- Key challenges faced during the organisation process
- Key challenges of performing in informal venues

**Materials Needed**

- Pen & paper
- Digital video- & audio-recording device
- Camera

**Process**

**Step 1**
Decide on the purpose and information you would like to obtain from the interview.

**Step 2**
Select the most relevant questions from the sample provided on pg. 40, or add your own questions.

**Tips**
- Conduct interviews with artists who are experienced in community arts or have performed at informal venues; parties who have organised neighbourhood activities before.
- Before starting the interview, seek consent from each interviewee on using the content for various purposes (e.g. reports, publications, presentations).
- Find a convenient, comfortable and quiet interview space (e.g. coffee shop, void-deck seating area). If possible, conduct the interview while walking through the neighbourhood of your interest (walk-along interview).
- Try to provide the interview questions in advance (e.g. 1-2 weeks).
- Control the direction and duration of the interview carefully.
Event Survey

Use this tool or technique when you want to gather data from the participants about your arts and cultural activities, e.g.:
- Participants’ profiles or demographic information
- History, nature and motivations for participation
- Quality of arts and cultural activities and venues
- Perceived spatial and social impacts generated by participating in arts and cultural activities

Materials Needed
Survey forms  Pens  Camera  Token of appreciation

Process
Step 1
Decide on the purpose and kind of information that you would like to obtain from the survey. Use the framework on pg. 4-5 to select the indicators you wish to measure.

Step 2
Select relevant questions from the sample questionnaire provided on pg. 42-44, or add your own questions.

Step 3
Conduct as many surveys as possible. Ideally, your sample size should cover at least 50% of the total number of participants. The smallest sample size for any meaningful statistical analysis is 20.

Analyse collected data using available software for basic statistical analysis (e.g. Microsoft Excel, Google Sheets) and report to your team or institution.

Tips
- Try to conduct surveys for all activities you organise or perform at. Alternatively, conduct surveys at different types of activities and venues to get insights about impacts of your activities in the neighbourhood.
- Provide the participants brief information about the reasons for conducting the survey.
- Give out the survey before the activity and collect the responses at the end. Set up a survey pop-up station.
- If respondents are not comfortable with filling the survey on their own, assist them through an interview format. This may require more manpower, who can speak relevant languages.
- Prepare the questionnaire in all relevant languages.

Sample Interview Questions

Space-Related
For event organisers
1. What spaces do you typically use for arts and cultural activities? Why?
2. What are the key challenges or advantages in organising arts and cultural activities at informal venues?
3. Are there any other spaces in the neighbourhood that you would like to utilise for this purpose?
4. What kind of permanent or temporary changes do you typically make in spaces when you organise arts and cultural activities, if any?

For artists
1. What is your preferred type of performance venue? Why?
2. What are the key challenges and advantages of performing in an outdoor public space? How does performing in outdoor informal venues differ from performing in enclosed formal venues?
3. When you performed in the neighbourhood, was the venue conducive for your performance in terms of sound control, air quality, accessibility, size and visibility to the participants, etc.? Did the venue allow you to have the desired level of connection with the participants?
4. Do you have suggestions for improving current neighbourhood spaces to better support arts and cultural activities?

Programme-Related
For event organisers and artists
1. What arts and cultural activities do you offer in the neighbourhood? How often?
2. Do you charge an entry fee for attending your arts and cultural activity?
3. What are your key considerations for choosing specific arts and cultural activities in this neighbourhood?
4. Do you involve established artists or arts interest groups for your arts and cultural activities? How?

Participation & Attendance-Related
For event organisers and artists
1. How many people are typically involved in organising an arts and cultural activity in your neighbourhood and what are their roles (e.g. organisers, collaborators, volunteers, participants)? What are the key challenges?
2. Who are the most frequent participants? Are the residents vocal in requesting certain activities?
3. What mechanisms do you employ to attract and retain the volunteers?
4. Have you been trained in any community participation skills? How?

What are your mechanisms to engage the participants?

Impact-Related Questions
For event organisers and artists
1. What impacts generated by your performance or activity have you observed in your participants and the neighbourhood thus far?
2. What are the desired outcomes of the arts and cultural activities that you offer, regarding space, activity and community?
3. Are there any potentially negative impacts that you have observed or you can think of?
4. Are you currently measuring impacts of your activity in any way? How?
Sample Questionnaire

General profile of respondents
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Postal code
- Gender
- Nationality
- Work or education profile

History of participation
1. Have you attended any arts and cultural activity in Singapore, in the last 12 months?
   Yes  No

2. Have you attended any arts and cultural activity in your neighbourhood before?
   Yes  No

3. Have you attended any activity before? or activities organised by NAC's Arts and Culture Node partners?
   Yes  No

Reason for attending
4. Why did you attend this arts and cultural activity? Choose one answer.
   ☐ I was forced to attend by .................................................................
   ☐ I was persuaded to attend by ...........................................................
   ☐ I just happened to be at the venue when the activity was already going on
   ☐ I decided on my own to attend this activity, after I heard about it through advertisement or public announcement
   ☐ I decided on my own to attend this activity, after I deliberately looked for the schedule of the arts and cultural activities

5. What are your general reasons for visiting this venue?
   Choose one or more answers.
   ☐ Passing by
   ☐ Meeting friends
   ☐ Arts and cultural activities
   ☐ Other activities
   ☐ Others .................................................................

6. How did you get information about this arts and cultural activity? Choose one or more answers.
   ☐ Announcement board on site
   ☐ National Arts Council website
   ☐ Other websites
   ☐ E-direct mailer
   ☐ Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
   ☐ Friends
   ☐ Flyers
   ☐ Passing by
   ☐ Others .................................................................

Overall assessment of the arts and cultural activity
7. How would you rate the overall quality of the activity?
   1 Very Poor  2 Poor  3 Average  4 Good  5 Excellent

8. How would you rate the overall level of enjoyment of the activity?
   1 Very Poor  2 Poor  3 Average  4 Good  5 Excellent

9. How engaging was the activity?
   1 Not At All  2 Not Engaging  3 Neutral  4 Engaging  5 Very Engaging

10. What can we do to improve the activity? Please write your answer.

Overall assessment of the space
11. How suitable is the venue for conducting arts and cultural activities?
   1 Very Unsuitable  2 Unsuitable  3 Neutral  4 Suitable  5 Very Suitable

12. How likely are you to participate in arts and cultural activities if the venue is closer to your home?
   1 Very Unlikely  2 Unlikely  3 Neutral  4 Likely  5 Very Likely

Activation of space
13. Do you agree with the following statement?
   Because of arts and cultural activities in the neighbourhood, I feel that the neighbourhood spaces are more vibrant.
   1 Strongly Disagree  2 Disagree  3 Neutral  4 Agree  5 Strongly Agree

Social impacts
14. Who did you attend this activity with? Choose one or more answers.
   ☐ Alone
   ☐ Family members
   ☐ Friends
   ☐ Neighbours
   ☐ Children below 12 years old
   ☐ Others .................................................................

15. Did you communicate with people at this activity, other than those you came with?
   ☐ No, I didn't speak to anyone
   ☐ Yes, I spoke to people I already know (e.g. neighbours, friends) who I met unintentionally
   ☐ Yes, I made new friends
Sample Questionnaire

Questions 16-21: Do you agree with the following statements?

16. Attending this arts and cultural activity improved my understanding and appreciation of different cultures and lifestyles.


17. After attending this arts and cultural activity, I feel more positive about the community I live in.


18. Upon attending this arts and cultural activity, I feel more attached to the neighbourhood I live in.


Mood and well-being impacts
19. After attending arts and cultural activities I feel happier and healthier.


Educational impacts
20. Attending this arts and cultural activity enriched my knowledge and artistic skills.


Interest in the arts
21. After attending arts and cultural activities I feel like pursuing additional arts-related activities (such as art classes, playing an instrument, join drama or dancing club, attending other art activities, workshops, post-event discussions, etc.).


22. How likely are you to participate in future arts and cultural activities in this neighbourhood?


23. How would you like to participate in the future arts and cultural activities in this neighbourhood? Choose one or more answers.

- Participant
- Volunteer
- Organiser
- Performer
- Others

TOOL

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Use this tool or technique when you want to gather in-depth qualitative information or validate the data you have collected through event surveys, e.g.:

- Residents’ perception of the venues for arts and cultural activities
- Residents’ appreciation of arts and cultural activities
- Residents’ feedback about future arts and cultural activities
- Perceived spatial and social impacts generated by participating in arts and cultural activities

Materials Needed

- Pen & paper
- Digital video- & audio-recording device
- Material needed for FGD
- Refreshment and token of appreciation

Process

Step 1
Decide on the purpose and type of information you would like to obtain from the FGD. Use the framework on pg. 4-5 as a guide to select the topics that you would like to discuss.

Step 2
Start FGD with simple questions. Select relevant questions from the sample initial questions provided on pg. 46, or add your own questions.

Step 3
Recruit participants.

Step 4
Conduct the FGD, analyse the collected information and report to your team or institution.

Step 5
Repeat FGD with the same or more specific questions after future activities to gain further qualitative insights. Select relevant questions from the sample specific questions provided on pg. 46, or add your own questions.

Tips

- Try to conduct the FGDs after different types of activities and venues to get a more holistic understanding about the impacts of your arts and cultural activity in the neighbourhood.
- Try to conduct FGD right after the activity, as it is easier to recruit participants then.
- Use different publicity channels to recruit participants.
- FGD should not be longer than 1 hour.
- Group of 5-6 people is manageable for one FGD facilitator and note taker.
- Be inclusive.
- Use FGD to initiate discussion between various stakeholders (policy makers, event organisers, artists and residents).
- Make sure everybody speaks. Facilitate the discussion but avoid imposing any answers. Begin with an icebreaker question and use other materials (photos, newspapers etc.) to prompt and support the discussion.
Sample FGD Questions

Initial Questions
1. [Ice-breaker] How did you like this arts and cultural activity today and why?
2. Have you ever attended any arts and cultural activities in the neighbourhood before?
   • With whom? What type of activity was that?
   • How is this activity different from previous that you attended?
   • Why do you like attending arts and cultural activities in your neighbourhood?
3. Let’s now brainstorm about what arts and cultural activities bring to your neighbourhood. Do you think arts make any difference to your neighbourhood? What are the changes?
   • Can you think of any impacts arts make to you and your community?
   • How about impacts on your neighbourhood spaces and their use?
   • Do you recognise any economic impacts?
   • In your opinion, what is the level of impacts of current arts and cultural activities in your neighbourhood?

Specific Questions
Activation of space
1. What do you think about the space holding the arts and cultural activity today? Can you describe the differences of the space before and after the activity?
   • Do you see the space differently after attending the activity?
   • How do you feel about the scale of this space?
     Do you prefer large or more intimate venues for activities? Why?
   • Where else would you like arts and cultural activities to take place in your neighbourhood? Why?

Neighbourhood identity and history
2. What do you think about the arts and cultural activities in this neighbourhood?
   • Is it important to you that the activities reflect the heritage of the community? Why?
   • What have you learnt after attending the activity?
   • Do you see the neighbourhood differently during and after activities? How?
   • Do you feel more attached to your neighbourhood or pride in your community because of the arts and cultural activities?

Interest in the arts
3. Do you take part in any arts and cultural activities (e.g. attending an arts course, hobby)? What? Where? How often?
4. Imagine a future arts and cultural activity. How would you like to participate (as an instructor, volunteer, participant, etc.)? Why?
   • Please be specific about what exactly you can do with this role.
   • What kind of event would that be? A workshop, dance performance, something else? Why?
Diversify the types of arts and cultural activities
Different types of arts and cultural activities may generate different impacts. Workshops generate greater level of social interaction, while performances bring vibrancy and identity to spaces and promote stronger sense of pride in the community.

Ensure adequate seating, lighting and ventilation to improve the experience for both participants and performers
Suitability of the venue can affect attendance, mood, perception of quality of an activity, place vibrancy and appreciation of and attachment to place and community.

Identify non-dedicated venues (schools and other neighbourhood institutions) to provide for the spatial needs of the arts
Build awareness of the availability of these venues for the practice or performance of the arts amongst residents.

Employ ‘Third Places’
Restaurants, cafes, shops or malls are places where people regularly meet and spend time and can help attract diverse participants for the arts.

Provide live-work environments for artists
Regular programming is a key factor in building an audience for the arts.

Artists are important facilitators and catalysts for creative activity. Community arts residencies are often an effective means for both supporting the artists and enriching the arts ecology within the neighbourhood.

Diversify the types of arts and cultural activities
Different types of arts and cultural activities may generate different impacts. Workshops generate greater level of social interaction, while performances bring vibrancy and identity to spaces and promote stronger sense of pride in the community.

Share your activities with other event organisers.

Keep improving the quality of arts and cultural activities
There is no clear consensus among the residents regarding what constitutes quality arts and cultural activities.

Consider what worked well for participants and design engaging and enjoyable activities based on such insights.

Involve both established artists and arts interest groups.

Build synergies with spaces that are close to amenities
Amenities attract people to stay at a space longer. Therefore, spaces near food courts or restaurants could be good locations for arts and cultural activities and boosting community bonding.

Adjacent amenities can also serve as an informal extension of the participation space.

Space

Use high-traffic spaces to attract more and diverse participants for the arts
However, such spaces can be highly sought-after and present competing distractions.

Identify a range of venues to suit different types of arts and cultural activities
Different types of activities have different spatial requirements (e.g. seating arrangement, noise control).

Utilisation of a variety of spaces provides greater exposure of the arts and brings vibrancy.

Informal venues tend to trigger higher level of social interaction.

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Different types of arts and cultural activities may generate different impacts. Workshops generate greater level of social interaction, while performances bring vibrancy and identity to spaces and promote stronger sense of pride in the community.

Maintain a diverse range of arts and cultural activities
Exposure to multiple experiences of arts and cultural activities adds to the richness in cultural appreciation.

Explore non-dedicated venues (community centres)
Other local institutions can be used for arts activities, and can be affordable and accessible.

Ensure that spaces are open and welcoming
Chosen for their openness, accessibility, and inclusiveness.

Programme
Provide a variety of options for participation in the arts
Passive consumption, interaction, curation, co-creation and self-initiation are all important modes of arts participation.

Provide conducive environments for different types of community arts engagement.

Diversify publicity approaches to reach out to more participants
The majority of neighbourhood arts and cultural activity participants are passers-by.

Enhance the visual or auditory character of the venue to attract participants prior to actual activities.

Use high-traffic spaces to publicise and build awareness for high-quality arts at low-traffic venues through pop-up teaser events.

Retention participants is equally important as attracting new ones
Repeat participants tend to take a more active role in future arts and cultural activity (as volunteers, organisers or performers) than first-time participants.

Repeat participants also tend to experience stronger social cohesion, better understanding of different cultures and lifestyles as well as higher well-being impacts.

Organise arts and cultural activities more frequently and regularly.

Footnotes
3. Key dimensions draw upon hardware, software and orgware components of good public space, as proposed by Cho et al. (2016).
12. See, Soulé et al. (2016).
23. See, e.g., Cohen et al. (2006), Hacking et al. (2008).