The Art of Measuring the Arts

Full report on the Roundtable on Bang for the Funding Buck: KPIs and Capturing the Impact of the Arts,

part of the IPS-SAM Spotlight on Cultural Policy Series

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Executive Summary

This is the report of a roundtable discussion organised by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) on 1 June 2018 titled "Bang for the Funding Buck: KPIs and Capturing the Impact of the Arts". The roundtable series is organised in collaboration with the Singapore Art Museum.

Artists and arts groups receiving government funding are familiar with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) imposed by the National Arts Council (NAC). What are these KPIs, and are they good measures of the impact of the direct and indirect state investment in the arts? Do KPIs capture the wider and deeper benefits of the arts, including the intangible and intrinsic, and the personal, social and political? Should more multidimensional assessments be used in addition to those that are economic and instrumental and that are easily measured? What should these be? In addition, how do KPIs and measurements feed into the justifications by NAC, the Ministry for Community, Culture and Youth (MCCY) and ultimately the Ministry of Finance for government funding of the arts? How do they determine the narratives of the arts among policymakers, artists and the public about the role of the arts and of the meaningful use of taxpayers' money?

These issues were discussed by policymakers, artists and art practitioners, academics, and other experts during the roundtable.

The three presenters were Kenneth Kwok, Assistant Chief Executive of the National Arts Council; Audrey Wong, Head of the School of Creative Industries at LASALLE College of the Arts; and Kuo Jian Hong, Artistic Director of The Theatre Practice. Following their presentations, Emmeline Yong, Co-founder and Director of Objectifs, and Vivian Wang and Cheryl Ong from The Observatory, gave their responses to the three presentations. The roundtable ended with a discussion session that was open to all participants.

Performance indicators: Evaluating impact and the difference we make

Mr Kwok spoke about NAC's approach to using KPIs to evaluate performance in the context of government funding. He said that funding across the public sector is competitive, and NAC has to demonstrate the impact its funding achieves in order to

secure funding for the arts. Furthermore, as a statutory board under MCCY, NAC aligns its priorities with MCCY's. This in turn directs how NAC disburses funding and determines the KPIs for the recipients of funding. The fundamental question is not *why* there needs to be KPIs, but *what* KPIs should be used. Mr Kwok stressed that NAC has taken into account feedback from the arts community in designing KPIs to ensure flexibility and to cater to the needs of different arts groups. For example, arts groups choose their own KPIs and set their own targets in conversation with NAC. Other examples include developing qualitative KPIs in an effort to go beyond just hard numbers, and adjusting the way NAC calculates the Cost Recovery Ratio (CRR)— assessing how viable a company would be without NAC's financial support—as a KPI. NAC also draws reference from the work of arts councils outside of Singapore to understand the KPIs they have been tracking. Mr Kwok ended his presentation by acknowledging that there may be better ways to measure performance in the arts sector, and that NAC is committed to having a dialogue with the arts community to continue to make KPIs more effective and meaningful.

Towards 'meaningful' KPIs? Capturing multidimensional impacts in the arts

Ms Wong made a case for moving towards more multidimensional ways of capturing the impact of the arts in Singapore. She said the link between a numeric result and the actual impact of an artwork is often not easily demonstrated because this impact is not always tangible. While NAC has made efforts to move away from purely numeric KPIs, more can still be done. She gave examples of frameworks that take into consideration the intrinsic and intangible nature of the arts when measuring its impact. For instance, in-depth studies of subjective audience experiences have measured the emotional resonance, and the transcendent and empowering aspects of an arts experience. Other studies have also used ethnographic and anthropological methods to capture the cultural nuances of audience behaviour. She added that the way KPIs are implemented implies that an arts organisation has "underperformed" or even "failed" by falling short of its KPIs. Thus, she called for KPIs to be seen as one dimension of indicating the effectiveness of an arts group to inform how they can improve, rather than the finality of being absolute measures of performance.

Defining ambiguity

Ms Kuo spoke about The Theatre Practice's (TTP) experience of dealing with KPIs imposed by NAC as a recipient of the Major Company Scheme. She said the condition of pegging a concrete percentage of its funding to TTP's performance was unsettling because it felt like the company was being forced into a "bottom-line situation". She also said the implementation of measuring TTP's CRR as a KPI did not make sense as it meant that grant recipients risk losing more money if they were not doing well financially to begin with. Furthermore, she questioned whether policymakers were cultivating a healthy cultural climate in Singapore when they compare arts companies with each other on a bell curve, often building competition among arts groups. Finally, she stressed the difference between "measure/assess" and "capture/evaluate", where the former possesses concrete values while the latter can be in question. She questioned whether one can measure something when the point of it is not to be measured, and challenged the assumption that the funding buck must always be followed by a "bang".

Responses

Ms Yong gave three follow-up thoughts in response to the presentations. First, KPIs should not take a "one-size-fits-all" approach. For instance, she said a veteran arts group with marketing resources might be able to perform better on audience outreach, whereas an individual artist might struggle to do so. Thus, whether quantitative or qualitative, KPIs should speak to the applicant's situation. Second, funding assessors should engage arts practitioners and equip them with the knowledge to analyse post-funding reports critically and meaningfully. For instance, she said when NAC used to release the name of grantees and the quantum received, names that received repeated funding suggested that they had fulfilled their KPIs and were a good benchmark for others. Third, responding directly to Ms Wong's comments about the finality of KPIs, Ms Yong said KPIs should be a two-way relationship between funder and receiver, where both work towards a common goal. Thus, KPIs should be considered in terms of what both parties want to achieve collectively.

Ms Wang and Ms Ong spoke about The Observatory's experience of using alternative ways of measuring KPIs and the challenges they faced. For instance, instead of using conventional audience surveys to measure audience reach and engagement, The Observatory used Facebook page analytics to track indicators such as how many

people "liked" or commented on their posts. However, one challenge they faced was when Facebook revised its algorithms, which affected how often their content appeared on users' news feeds. Another challenge was due to Facebook's data breach scandal, which caused their overall engagement to plunge as users left the platform. Despite these challenges, Ms Wang and Ms Ong were heartened that NAC was always open to conversation and to discussing how to mitigate their situation without affecting their funding. However, they questioned why artists have to do all the measuring themselves, and asked whether NAC should hire objective experts to measure the impact of the arts instead.

Discussion

The main points raised in the discussion were:

1. **What should be measured?** Participants pointed out that the metrics used to measure the impact of the arts tend to focus on the "direct" and "immediate" impacts, such as audience numbers and audience experience. However, more should be done to measure the "indirect" impacts of the arts, such as how a critically thinking individual who had engaged in the arts can benefit his or her community. Participants also said there tends to be a focus on measuring what has been achieved, but not what is missing. Thus, KPIs should also aim to measure the latter in order to shift policymaking to fill these gaps.

2. **Who should measure/be measured?** Participants proposed the idea that, besides having KPIs imposed by NAC on artists and arts groups, members of the arts community should also develop their own KPIs to measure the effectiveness of NAC as an advocate for the arts, and whether NAC's policies have created a safe space for artists to create art.

3. **How should we measure?** Participants pointed out that although the concept of KPIs is often associated with economics, even economists themselves have recognised the limitations of KPIs as a form of measurement. For instance, numeric measurements might be useful when they are representative or indicative of something and serve as a diagnostic tool, but the same measurement would cease to be valuable and effective if the number becomes a target. New ways of measuring the impact of the arts, such as the method of "thick description" from the discipline of anthropology, were also proposed for consideration.

4. Why should we measure? Some participants challenged the need for having KPIs as a form of measurement to begin with. For instance, public expenditure in certain domains, such as defence and education, do not need any justification because society has agreed that they are important and necessary. Thus, Singapore should work towards a stage where the arts is acknowledged to be good in itself because it is art, and that there is no need to justify the utility of the arts instrumentally.

Introduction

Together with the Singapore Art Museum, IPS organised a roundtable discussion on 1 June 2018 to look into the subject of KPIs and capturing the impact of the arts in Singapore. Held at the Singapore Art Museum, the roundtable examined the following issues:

- What are these KPIs, and are they good measures of the impact of direct and indirect state investment in the arts?

- While KPIs have evolved in recent years to include more qualitative measures, such as audience satisfaction, do they go far enough to capture the wider and deeper benefits of the arts, including the intangible and intrinsic, and the personal, social and political?

- Should more multidimensional assessments be used in addition to those that are economic and instrumental and that are easily measured? What should these be?

- How do KPIs and other statistics generated feed into justifications by NAC, MCCY and ultimately the Ministry of Finance for government funding of the arts? How do they determine the narratives of the arts among policymakers, artists and the public about the role of the arts and of the meaningful use of taxpayers' money?

A total of 58 participants attended the roundtable, including policymakers, academics, artists and arts practitioners, and experts from other relevant sectors.

The roundtable was chaired by Tan Tarn How, Adjunct Senior Research Fellow at IPS. First, three speakers—Kenneth Kwok, Assistant Chief Executive of the National Arts Council; Audrey Wong, Head of the School of Creative Industries at LASALLE College of the Arts; and Kuo Jian Hong, Artistic Director of The Theatre Practice—each gave a presentation on the topic. Following that, Emmeline Yong, Co-founder and Director of Objectifs, and Vivian Wang and Cheryl Ong from The Observatory, gave their responses to the three presentations. Finally, there was an open discussion for all participants moderated by Mr Tan.

Speaker 1: Kenneth Kwok

Performance indicators: Evaluating impact and the difference we make

Some of you may know me not only from NAC but also my previous life as an arts educator and an arts writer. During my time as an educator, some of my work was as part of an arts group which applied to NAC for funding. That was a short and limited experience, but I believe it did give me at least a bit of insight into some of the real issues and tensions that arise when applying for grants, and the KPIs attached to them.

In fact, it is my experience as an arts educator that helped to inform the title of my presentation today. I remember, during my teaching days, there was a joke about a group of people comparing their salaries, asking who earned more. Someone turns to a teacher and says, "What do you make?" The teacher replies, "I make a difference." I think that is something that resonates with all of us in the arts sector, because that is why we do what we do. We believe that the arts make a difference, but that difference is not something that we can easily articulate in a number or in a word. And, yes, in an ideal world, we would not have to. At the same time, the reality is that restrictions do apply; it is hard for any funder, whether it is government or the private sector, to be able to fund without any expectations or restrictions.

I remember a conversation that I had a few years ago with a veteran artist. There was a funder who was interested in pouring more money into the arts but who asked for hard numbers. The artist told me, "I can't quantify my work in that way, but every time I do the work that I do, I can feel it in my heart and I can see it in the faces of my audience." As an educator, I was on the same page and understood how she felt. And that is what we told the funder: Do not just look at the report, come and see the work, come and see how the work impacts the audience. The funder, however, said, "Just give me the report and that's fine. I'll still fund the project." The problem we face is the gap between where we want to be and where we are now, and what we do about it in the meantime. NAC will certainly continue our advocacy work, and try to convince and educate funding bodies about the bigger picture, but right now this is our reality where we still need to be able to account in concrete terms for how money is used.

We are aware that today's conversation will be fraught, but I would like to thank Tarn How and IPS for inviting NAC to be here. It is important for us to clearly articulate our position to the arts community but, more importantly, we sincerely want to

continue to engage the arts community on this topic. In fact, as I will share later, some of the decisions that NAC has made about KPIs have changed over the years precisely because of your feedback. We are definitely open to continuing to review our policies over time.

NAC's vision, mission and KPIs

I want to start with NAC's mission, vision and KPIs. Our mission is to champion not just the creation but also the appreciation of the arts. We believe the arts should be a part of everyone's everyday lives. What this means is that, if we are able to do our work well, that is, not just support more artistic creation but also enable more people to access and appreciate the arts, Singapore will become a place that supports artistic diversity. In terms of our vision, when we say "Inspire our People", we do not just mean the general public; we also mean the artistic community. We know our artists must feel inspired, supported and engaged to do their best work. Our vision also refers to wanting the different communities in Singapore to be better connected through the arts, and for Singaporeans to take pride in our artists and their works.

I must also highlight that NAC is a statutory board, fully funded by MCCY. MCCY has three priority areas—care, cohesion and confidence—and NAC, as a statutory board of MCCY, is located within this framework of priorities. We ask ourselves what these priorities mean for the arts.

We see two parts to "care". One is caring for our artists. We care about supporting the artistic community's needs and aspirations. This includes enabling artistic creation through the various grants, programmes and housing subsidies that NAC offers. It also includes trying to diversify arts funding to give more options to groups by cultivating philanthropists, and supporting the development of arts groups' different capabilities, such as marketing and audience development. The second part of "care", though, is about caring for our audiences, to make sure that there are enough platforms for them to enjoy the arts, to learn and develop and reflect through the arts. We try to look at how we can increase audience access by activating more public spaces for the arts, and nurturing arts programmes that resonate with audiences.

In terms of "cohesion", we want to enable Singaporeans to build strong bonds with one another through the arts. This may seem very much public-focused, but of course this cannot be achieved without first nurturing a body of artistic works that speak to Singapore audiences. We thus hope to facilitate the creation of more works that

express what it means to be Singaporean. As part of this strand, we also hope to support more programmes that are truly inclusive, and engage under-reached segments.

With regard to the value of "confidence", for us to be proud of Singapore is for us to be proud of what we as Singaporeans can achieve as an artistic and creative people. What NAC hopes to do is enable the best of Singapore talent to be celebrated in Singapore and to go out to the world to reach new markets and audiences. NAC will continue to recognise and nurture our talent through different awards, funding opportunities and programmes.

The reason I am sharing all of this with you is that, at the end of the day, all of it has to be aligned. The priorities of MCCY, our parent ministry, will naturally be the priorities of NAC. And, in turn, NAC's priorities will direct how NAC gives out funding and how we determine the KPIs for grant recipients. It is also not just arts groups that have KPIs. Government agencies have KPIs too, if we are to secure funding from the Ministry of Finance. The block of funding from the Arts and Culture Strategic Review (ACSR) for arts excellence and arts engagement comes with its own KPIs, which focus on Singaporeans attending and participating in the arts. Likewise, MCCY has KPIs such as arts attendance in general, attendance at ticketed events specifically, as well as volunteerism in the arts sector.

NAC's indicators include the percentage of Singaporeans attending arts events and also the percentage of Singaporeans who believe in the value of the arts. We added this second KPI even though it is a soft or subjective indicator, because we feel it is about not only whether people are turning up for shows but also whether they believe in their hearts in the importance of the arts in society.

We also have an indicator for the quality of works produced by Singapore artists. This has four components: reviews by arts assessors, international awards received, invitations to international festivals and events, and media reviews and coverage. In terms of the arts ecosystem, we look at the financial stability of the arts groups through the CRR, and what NAC is doing to cultivate more private giving to the arts. There are also two indicators based on a survey that we administer every year to ask the arts community for your views on whether NAC's work has contributed to the growth of the arts scene, and whether your experience with NAC has been positive.

We have checked with arts councils outside of Singapore to understand the KPIs that they are tracking, and Singapore, is not that different. We have been tracking more or

less the same measures as other arts councils. Looking at the KPIs used by Arts Council England (in its 2017/18 Annual Report), the Australia Council for the Arts (in its 2018–2022 Corporate Plan) and the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa (in its 2017 Annual Report), we can see that there is generally an emphasis on attendance at arts events, participation, the number of works supported, and so on. I hope this assures the community that NAC is aligned with other arts councils. Perhaps there are better ways to measure performance in the arts sector, and we are here to talk about this, but right now this is how most agencies are evaluating performance in return for funding.

And if we look at these KPIs, we are doing well as an arts sector. According to NAC's 2015 Population Survey of the Arts, nearly 80 per cent of people in Singapore said they experienced at least one arts activity in 2015 (compared to 48 per cent in 2011); more than 70 per cent said that the arts and culture were important because they improved the quality of life (compared to 62 per cent in 2011); and nearly 80 per cent said that the arts scene in Singapore was more vibrant than it was five years ago. These may just be numbers, but they tell a story, giving us the sense that, yes, we do seem to be moving in the right direction in terms of elevating the role of the arts in Singapore.

Mr Kwok speaking about NAC's mission, vision and position on KPIs.

I am happy to say that this evidence is precisely what was needed to be able to secure more arts funding. Over the last five years, funding to the arts and culture sector has increased from $320.4 million to $432.6 million. Of course, at the same time, we know there are more people applying for the funding available so, on an individual basis, some of you may not feel that increase, but I hope you can see that the sector as a whole has benefitted because we have been able to deliver on the KPIs.

Shared understanding

Before we go into the details of the KPIs that NAC works with, I think it is important for us to establish some starting points. I believe that, unless we can broadly agree on these, it will be very hard to have this discussion today.

First of all, we must all accept that NAC is part of the same arts community and wants the arts sector in Singapore to succeed. If nothing else, if the arts sector does well, NAC is doing well.

Additionally, if there are issues that arise, such as funding recovery, NAC staff actually have to do more work to resolve them. The second point I would like to emphasise is that money that is not channelled to one arts group is channelled back into the arts sector, either through grants funding to another group or through other programmes and initiatives. This money goes not into the wallets of NAC staff but back to the arts community.

Thirdly, whatever NAC does must be for the benefit of the arts scene as a whole. In assessing individual grants, yes, we want to support the aspirations of individual artists and groups but, if we have limited funds, we must prioritise funding towards projects and programmes that address the gaps and maximise opportunities for the entire arts sector.

Fourthly, I also hope that we can establish a certain level of respect between NAC and the arts community, because all of us are arts professionals. We are sometimes told by the arts community that we do not understand the arts because we are not artists ourselves. I know it is our responsibility to convince you, but I hope we can build an understanding that NAC staff do work hard, we do all have a passion for the arts, and many of us have a background in the arts. We also have expert knowledge about the arts sector through our access to information across all artists and arts groups in

Singapore, as well as through our links with other arts councils, and agencies and institutions beyond the arts.

Finally, with reference to performance indicators, we hope that arts groups will see the value of KPIs not only for reporting to NAC but also for your own companies. A lot of the KPIs we track were co-developed with arts groups, precisely because we wanted them to be meaningful.

Why are KPIs necessary?

With that in place, let us talk about the KPIs themselves. Firstly, why are KPIs necessary? We have already covered some of these points. The reality is that funding across the public sector is competitive, and in order for NAC to secure funding for the arts, we must be able to show the impact that funding will achieve. As a statutory board under MCCY, this also means aligning with MCCY's priorities, as well as Whole-of-Government outcomes. In a public agency like ours, KPIs are also needed because we are accountable to our own external audits and, likewise, face consequences if we do not adhere to audit requirements, some of which, yes, then directly impact you, as the recipients of the grants we disburse.

Finally, KPIs are important because NAC needs a system to be able to determine how we should be giving out funding. Ultimately, NAC must ensure that arts funding is used to meet the needs of the arts sector. We have to have some way to determine who the most suitable recipients and projects are, so that money is well spent and outcomes are achieved.

"The fundamental question, then, is not why we need to have KPIs—we cannot avoid them—but what KPIs we should be using."

What KPIs should we use?

The fundamental question, then, is not why we need to have KPIs—we cannot avoid them—but what KPIs we should be using.

Here again, looking at the KPIs for Major Companies (*see Figure 1*), I would like to highlight that we have drawn reference from other arts councils, and the KPIs that they track for their own equivalent of the Major Companies. If you look at the KPIs of other arts councils—Arts Council England, Australia Council for the Arts, and Hong Kong Arts Development Council—we see that the KPIs tracked by these councils are similar to what NAC looks at: attendance, audience satisfaction, number of participants. Again, there may be better ways to measure performance, and we would love to hear from you. We continue to be in discussion with other arts councils about this. All of us recognise that the arts are multifaceted, so hard KPIs will never be sufficient to truly measure impact effectively. We also know that tracking numbers is an administrative burden on artists and arts groups. The question is how we balance flexibility and differentiation with the needs and requirements I shared earlier.

Table 1: Key Performance Indicators for Major Companies

Key areas	Types of indicators[1]
Quality content of programmes and services	• Number of attendees at ticketed / non-ticketed shows • Audience satisfaction with content • Number of participants attending programmes
Engagement of stakeholders and/or members of the public	
Contribution to the development of the artform and/or industry	*<Customised for each organisation>*
Management capabilities, financial sustainability, governance and alignment with national outcomes	Cost recovery ratio

[1] Other customised indicators may be agreed upon in discussion between NAC and the arts organisation

Table 2: Key Performance Indicators for Project Grants

Key areas	Types of indicators
• Artistic strength • Public engagement • Capability to execute	• Project deliverables – e.g., # of new works, # of exhibition days • # of attendees / participants • # of volunteers (where applicable

Figure 1: KPIs of NAC's Major Company and project grants.

NAC has been trying to do this to some extent, adapting our KPIs over the years, taking into account feedback from the arts community. For one thing, we have reduced the number of KPIs that Major Companies must report from 10–12 to 4–5. Groups also choose from a list of KPIs and set their own targets for these KPIs in conversation with NAC. Additionally, instead of a standard list of KPIs for all Major Companies, the list of KPIs is now differentiated according to which of the three Major Company tracks the group identifies for itself.

In an effort to go beyond just hard numbers, we have developed a KPI for contribution to the development of the art form, which is a qualitative report. We have also made exceptions when there are good reasons why targets are not met, such as when a haze affects attendance. With feedback from the community, we have also adjusted the way we calculate CRR, by accounting for in-kind sponsorship. Finally, while we develop these KPIs with the Major Companies at the start of the funding term, there are opportunities for groups to engage their NAC account manager in dialogue throughout the year.

Looking ahead

Looking ahead, while NAC cannot do away with KPIs, we are sincere about continuing our efforts to look at different ways of measuring the arts. To do this, we are talking to our counterparts in arts councils, social service organisations outside the arts, academics, and so on.

We are also continuing our own research on how the arts can impact society beyond attendance, participation and vibrancy. For example, we are partnering researchers on projects looking at the role of the arts in healing and therapy for senior citizens. We hope that this will help generate more information that we can use to advocate the true value of the arts to the wider public, funders and other policymakers.

Besides this, NAC wants to offer practical help. If our KPIs are too restrictive, how can we increase the alternatives available to artists and arts groups? We hope to work with the arts community to raise earned income from audiences through stronger audience development efforts. We also want to help the arts community increase raised income, by facilitating patronage from corporates, private donors, and individuals. Ideally, if an artist is not comfortable with the KPIs set by Funder X, they should be able to tap on funding from Funder Y instead.

Conclusion

I hope I have been able to give you a clearer idea of where NAC is coming from. We need to have KPIs, and these KPIs have not been developed in isolation but have taken into consideration your views and what we have learnt from other councils. At the same time, NAC is committed to staying in dialogue with the arts community on how we can continue to evolve these KPIs to make them more effective and meaningful.

Speaker 2: Audrey Wong

Towards 'meaningful' KPIs? Capturing multidimensional impacts in the arts

The purpose of today's IPS roundtable is to deepen dialogue on assessing the effectiveness of arts funding. I hope the discussions will lead towards more multidimensional ways of capturing the impacts of what artists and arts groups do in Singapore. I will add to the context of the critique with some observations on how we currently use KPIs in arts funding and the perceptions of arts groups towards these, and then describe frameworks that have been used to measure impacts while taking into consideration the intrinsic and intangible nature of the arts.

I will start with the obvious: making the link between the "impact of state investment in the arts" and the KPIs that arts grant recipients are required to report on. As with any kind of grant, the party providing the funds, whether government or private, expects to see results. These are most often financial results for which there are established ways of demonstrating returns, such as sales and profits. When it is a government body providing the funds, one might argue that the question of accountability for the use of taxpayers' money is even more important than a financial return. It is still easiest to demonstrate returns, financial or otherwise, from numeric indicators, as can be seen in this snapshot taken from the self-evaluation report of the NAC's Creation Grant (*see Figure 2*).

For Performances / Exhibitions	Actual
Number of Performances / Exhibition Days	
Total attendance	
Number of tickets sold (if applicable)	
Percentage House (if applicable)	
Number of new works created (if applicable)	
For Block Publishing Projects	
Number of copies produced	
Number of copies sold	
Number of new works created (if applicable)	
For Other Activities (e.g. Conferences)	
Number of Activities	
Total Attendance	
Number of Tickets Sold (if applicable)	
Number of new works created (if applicable)	
For International Activities	
Number of cities visited	
Number of tickets sold (if applicable)	
Percentage House (if applicable)	

Figure 2: Table from self-evaluation report of NAC's Creation Grant.

In the arts and other social sectors, the link between a numeric result and the actual impact of the work is not easily demonstrated mainly because of two factors: first, the creation of a stupendous work of art and the audience's experience of it are not always tangible; and second, an arts organisation may have multiple bottom lines, not all of which may be critical for the funder.

There is also a third factor: the foundational question of what funding is. It is a policy tool. Governments use grants as a tool to direct behaviour to achieve strategic policy ends. What is the connection between the KPIs of an arts organisation and Singapore's wider arts policy goals? Let's take a look at the current situation.

In NAC's 2016/2017 Annual Report, a strategic goal is explicitly stated by the CEO:

> *A key priority ahead is to support new entrants into the arts sector, while sustaining the established arts groups that currently fill strategic gaps in the industry.*

The context here is an implicit acceptance of the vibrancy in Singapore's arts and urban landscape as indicated by the sheer number of events: The NAC report notes there are an average of 23 performances and 72 visual art exhibitions to choose from each day. In terms of numeric indicators of "vibrancy", such as number of events and public reached, there is a generally upward trend. One can imagine that the quantitative reporting on activities and productions by grant recipients feeds into this demonstration of "vibrancy".

Because funding is a policy tool, the support schemes for artists and arts groups have changed because of changing strategic goals. In the 2010–2012 ACSR process, it was recognised that arts groups were in different stages of maturation and had different needs; the idea of supporting an arts group throughout its life cycle took hold and support schemes were tweaked through reviews. Two key support schemes are the Grants Schemes and Arts Housing, and frameworks for both have changed. In 2010, a new Framework for Arts Spaces was introduced with the intention of stimulating more "churn" in the use of arts housing spaces and ensuring that new artists and groups had a chance to use these spaces. As the policy strand of community engagement became stronger, arts housing recipients had an explicit KPI of contributing to placemaking and "active engagement" of target audiences and communities, as can be seen in the conditions listed in the Open Call for Arts Spaces circulated to artists and arts groups wishing to apply for arts housing.

Some changes to the grants scheme were: the introduction of the Seed Grant; a revision to the Major Grant, now the Major Company Scheme; and the introduction of the Arts Creation Fund to stimulate the creation of significant and signature Singapore artworks. The current Grants scheme as of 2018 comprises the following types of grants: Seed Grant, Major Company Scheme, Creation Grant, Production Grant, Presentation and Participation Grant, Market and Audience Development, Capability Development, Research Grant, Arts Fund and Traditional Arts Repository. This list of grants implies an idealised road map of development for an arts group in the publicly funded arts ecosystem, with a view towards arts groups eventually reaching a state of sustainability where they attract sufficient income, donations and sponsorship and will thus be less reliant on government grants to meet operating needs.

A recent change to the Major Company Scheme which shows a move to the new strategic direction is that arts organisations now choose one of three tracks: artmaking, bridging or intermediary (*see Figure 3*). Groups on this scheme thus need to demonstrate how effectively they deliver the intentions of their respective tracks.

Type of Tracks	Artmaking	Bridging	Intermediary
Main Focus of Company	a) Creating original works which add to Singapore's cultural canon and which earn critical acclaim at home and abroad; AND/OR b) presenting/adapting works of the highest quality, which Singaporeans take pride in and are enriched by. In best instances, these companies create and/or present work which reflects our Singapore narrative and multi-ethnic identities	a) Creating presentations/ programmes that reach out to specific demographics (e.g. youths, children, seniors) or underserved segments (e.g. the disabled, youths-at-risk, people from low-income backgrounds); AND b) expanding/advocating access to the arts for all, developing new audiences, build and raise appreciation of the arts.	a) Supporting the development of practitioners/artists and/or the sector. They do so by: - advocating the arts; - providing administrative services; - providing opportunities for capability development (e.g. residencies, mentorships); - engaging in research and documentation; and - facilitating domestic and international networks, amongst other services.

Figure 3: Three tracks of artistic pursuits supported by NAC's Major Company Scheme.

How can an arts group demonstrate the effective use of the grant received? One way is to use KPIs to track the attainment of milestones. KPIs are agreed between the company and NAC and comprise a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators. NAC has made the effort to move away from purely numeric indicators. For example, to indicate "contribution to the development of the art form or industry", the Major Company Scheme guidelines on the NAC's website note that there is "no specific KPI but to be captured qualitatively in annual self-assessment and validated by industry panel."

The qualitative indicators allow for a more narrative approach, as can be seen from the self-evaluation report of the Presentation and Participation Grant:

- Question 1: Did your project go as planned? Highlight key changes to your project (if any).
- Question 2: How do you think your project has contributed to your development as an artist, and to the larger arts scene?
- Question 3: What was your audience/participant profile like and how was their response to your work?
- Question 4: What challenges did you meet along the way, and how did you overcome them?

We might wonder how answers to these questions help demonstrate the "good use" of public funds. In answering Question 1, for example, what degree of unplanned changes would reflect a less-than-good use of public funds? In Question 2, how do both parties—the artist and NAC or its evaluation panel—assess the contribution and how can each party be certain of the accuracy of their evaluation? If the artist answers "there were challenges I failed to overcome", does this indicate "failure" of the grant to provide bang for the buck? It is not an exact science.

There is a subtext to the use of KPIs that is felt by grant recipients but is not always articulated: the idea of "evaluation", or performance measurement. The subtext is that, if you fall short of the KPIs, the organisation has "failed", so the spectre of underperformance haunts the organisation. The truth is that KPIs do not and cannot cover the full spectrum of the arts project or arts group's work. Organisations feel that their performance is being "measured" by the grant maker when, in fact, as independent non-profit entities, they are accountable to a larger group of stakeholders, which may include staff, audiences, artists, beneficiaries and sponsors. Literature on non-profit management has discussed what constitutes performance

measurement for such organisations. For example, a 2009 study by Johanne Turbide and Claude Laurin titled "Performance measurement in the arts sector: The case of the performing arts" in the *International Journal of Arts Management* states that "performance" of non-profits is "problematic because it is a socially created notion" where diverse stakeholders may be involved in assessing the organisation and they may not be in agreement.

Yet, once the organisation is a recipient of, particularly, the Major Company or Seed Grant from NAC, they then become funded on the basis of organisational effectiveness. This is why the CRR becomes a factor and a pressure felt by companies. This was one of the findings from dissertation research conducted by a student, Jo Lim, in the MA Arts and Cultural Management course that I teach in. She was looking at the management challenges of small non-profit theatre companies and found that most felt these immediate pressures: having to raise funds and sponsorships and not always having the capacity, experience or know-how to do this; having to put more resources into hiring administrative/managerial staff; having to pay more attention to office administration and work that pays (such as education programmes) while still having to present new productions each year (the production "churn"). Other pressures mentioned include the need to meet KPIs such as getting enough audience members to respond to post-show surveys and having a certain percentage of the audience report a positive experience of the show. Practitioners also noted that the arts funding system is now entrenched and influences how companies operate.

"There is a subtext to the use of KPIs that is felt by grant recipients but is not always articulated: the idea of 'evaluation', or performance measurement. The subtext is that, if you fall short of the KPIs, the organisation has 'failed', so the spectre of underperformance haunts the organisation. The truth is that KPIs do not and cannot cover the full spectrum of the arts project or arts group's work."

The influence of funders was also noted in Turbide and Laurin's research on arts organisations in Canada. They found that most conducted financial monitoring more than artistic evaluation: Financial and numeric indicators are easier to develop and

monitor than artistic measures. Indeed, old habits die hard. I was able to view KPIs from a couple of arts groups that showed numeric indicators like the number of participating artists, the number of activities conducted and audience size.

The demonstration of organisational effectiveness is a criterion, even for arts groups not being funded specifically for operational effectiveness. For example, in a couple of the arts housing schemes, "sound management capabilities and strong governance" are part of the criteria.

The implication here is that Singapore arts groups are being nudged into adopting certain management structures and practices which follow a model of operation established in Western democracies with state funding systems. Roland J. Kushner and Peter P. Poole's 1996 study "Exploring structure-effectiveness relationships in nonprofit arts organizations" in *Nonprofit Management & Leadership* proposed that the effectiveness of such organisations can be seen in four areas: (1) satisfying audiences, volunteers and donors; (2) financial and human resources; (3) organising these resources efficiently to present arts programmes; and (4) achieving the objectives of arts programmes. "Bang for the funding buck", then, means more than the achievement of an artistically satisfying piece of work.

At this point, it might be useful to note that KPIs need not be used purely to judge outcomes but can be about process as well. A company can set indicators for internal use to track improvements underway or how it is moving towards identified goals.

Moving on to link KPIs to the question of the public value of the arts and the broader social benefits, we should first distinguish between the terms "value" and "benefits". The former describes a more subjective measure that applies to a community or society at large, while the latter describes more immediately measurable outcomes. "Benefits" are usually instrumental, such as effects on people's health and students' achievement in school.

The concept of arts "impact" is problematic, as numerous authors have discussed. Studies such as Eleonora Belfiore and Oliver Bennett's "Beyond the 'toolkit approach': Arts impact evaluation research and the realities of cultural policy-making" (2010) in the *Journal for Cultural Research* and "Rethinking the social impacts of the arts" (2007) in the *International Journal of Cultural Policy* have noted that, while impact studies are often methodologically flawed, the drive for evidence-based policy making in government may have resulted in "policy-based evidence making", where research is conducted for the purpose of advocating for more support

for the arts or for better policy, and accompanied by studies demonstrating instrumental benefits, economic returns and multiplier effects. Developing the "right" indicators to demonstrate instrumental "benefits" is also not an exact science, and scholars have noted that most studies do not comprehensively establish causality between the arts experience and the benefit claimed.

Is it possible to devise measures to capture the intangible and intrinsic qualities of the arts? And are there other useful measures for capturing the "footprint" of an arts organisation in its community and society?

It is impossible to speak about capturing the intrinsic benefits of the arts without mentioning the seminal 2004 report "Gifts of the muse: Reframing the debate about the benefits of the arts", authored by Kevin McCarthy, Elizabeth H. Ondaatje, Laura Zakaras and Arthur Brooks. It linked the intrinsic and instrumental sides of the equation and acknowledged "the central role intrinsic benefits play in generating all benefits deriving from the arts". The "private" (or individual) benefits have a spillover effect into the "public good" realm (*see Figure 4*).

Framework for Understanding the Benefits of the Arts

Instrumental benefits

| Improved test scores | Improved self-efficacy, learning skills, health | Development of social capital |
| | | Economic growth |

Private benefits —— *Private benefits with public spillover* —— **Public benefits**

| Captivation | Expanded capacity for empathy | Creation of social bonds |
| Pleasure | Cognitive growth | Expression of communal meaning |

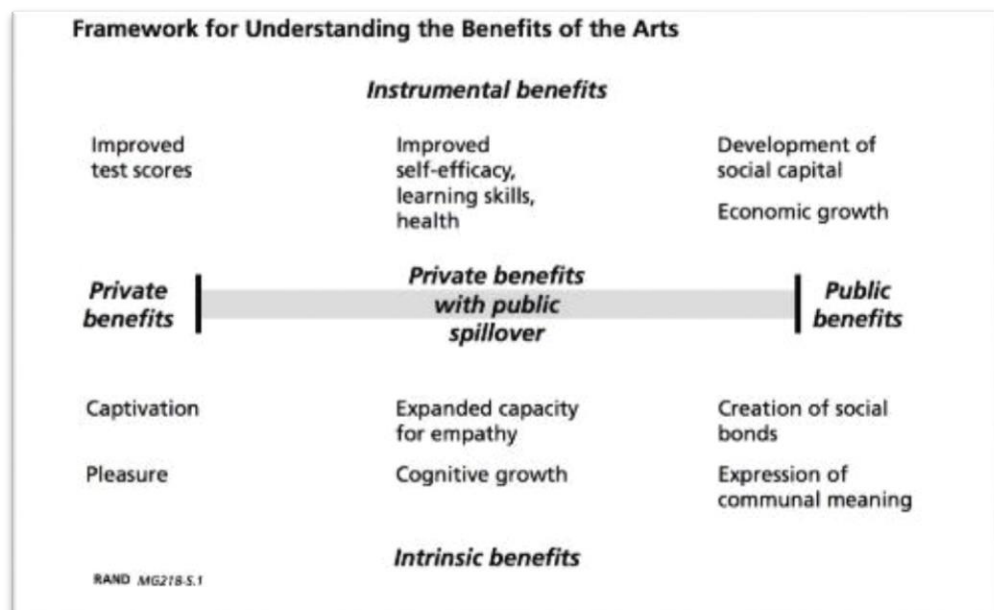*Intrinsic benefits*

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Figure 4: Framework for understanding the benefits of the arts.

Indeed, there are "public benefits" that are also intrinsic benefits: the creation of social bonds (through the shared experience common in arts programmes for the public, for example) and the expression of communal meaning.

The report was effectively an audience development policy document. It found that "the most important instrumental benefits require sustained involvement in the arts" and proposed that policy should focus on enabling people to sustain their arts participation and not just to have introductory access to the arts.

In Singapore, while we have some studies in the arts, such as Singapore Cultural Statistics and the National Population Survey on the Arts, these tend to be statistical in nature, capturing demographic and broad behavioural patterns. Perhaps we need in-depth studies of the audience's arts experiences. Currently, arts groups are required to survey their audience, but it is not clear how the information is used. Many arts groups use these to gather data to meet their KPI for audience satisfaction (percentage of audience who give the performance a rating of "very satisfied" or "satisfied").

Therefore, an area where NAC could take the lead is in developing more audience research and in working with arts organisations to develop more nuanced audience indicators.

Ms Wong giving her presentation on capturing the multidimensional impact of the arts.

Is it possible to measure the "intrinsic" dimension of the subjective audience experience? Yes. A few studies exist in this area, such as Alan S. Brown and Jennifer L. Novak's "Assessing the intrinsic impacts of a live performance" (2007), which demonstrated that it was indeed possible to measure the audience's subjective responses to live performances of drama, music and dance. They did this through a research design of before-and-after questionnaires. The research was based on an analytical framework of two sets of constructs: Readiness Constructs and Impact Constructs. The Readiness Constructs measure the audience member's "readiness to receive" the performance before the curtain rises, how much experience and knowledge the person has about the performance, and their level of anticipation (high or low expectations).

The Impact Constructs log the audience members' responses during the performance and include a captivation index (how "absorbed" the audience member was in the performance), an emotional resonance index, a spiritual value index (the "transcendant" and "empowering" aspects) and a social bonding index. Both sets of indices are captured by a series of questions. The authors conclude that the captivation index is the most powerful. In this study, the authors demonstrated that it was not impossible to capture the "intrinsic" effects of an arts experience.

There are not many studies adopting qualitative approaches to studying audiences, but recently Ben Walmsley studied the audience experience using ethnographic and anthropological methods in "'A big part of my life': A qualitative study of the impact of theatre" (2013) in *Arts Marketing: An International Journal* and "Deep hanging out in the arts: An anthropological approach to capturing cultural value" (2018) in the *International Journal of Cultural Policy*. Of course, these studies could be culture-specific, and Singapore audiences may behave differently.

A further dimension of trying to capture the "performance" of an arts organisation is to consider its work over time, that is, its relationships with and influence on stakeholders, audiences and the wider public. This might better capture the organisation's footprint and requires a more 360-degree view involving both quantitative and qualitative indicators. These may also be useful for developing more robust and detailed understandings of the arts ecosystem.

Perhaps a useful exercise for NAC to undertake is the collation and analysis of the qualitative and narrative responses in self-evaluation reports from grant recipients, in order to build a collective picture of the sector and generate some narrative understandings of their footprint.

In terms of a more 360-degree perspective that includes both quantitative and qualitative dimensions, I will give a final example from another U.S. study using a variety of indicators to measure impact (*see Figure 5*). Maria R. Jackson, Florence Kabwasa-Green and Joaquín Herranz's 2006 study, "Cultural vitality in communities: Interpretations and indicators", published by the Urban Institute, proposes a framework that combines different dimensions of cultural life, cultural provision, support and resources, drawing on different datasets collected locally and nationally to build a picture of cultural vitality in cities and neighbourhoods.

A Three-Part Framework

The Urban Institute's Arts and Culture Indicators Project recommends monitoring and measuring three broad aspects of cultural vitality over time as a way to understand and encourage arts and cultural activity and its often positive impacts on communities.

1. Presence of Opportunities for Cultural Participation

- Nonprofit, commercial, and public sector arts-related organizations
- Retail arts venues—book stores, music stores, film theaters, craft and art supply stores
- Art schools
- Non-arts venues with arts and cultural programming—parks, libraries, community centers, ethnic associations, churches
- Festivals, parades, arts and crafts marketplaces
- Formal and informal cultural districts; neighborhoods where artists congregate
- Web-based opportunities for cultural engagement specific to the place in question

2. Participation in Arts and Cultural Activity

- Amateur art making
- Collective and community art making
- K-12 arts education
- After-school arts programs
- Audience participation
- Purchase of artistic goods (materials for making; final arts products)
- Discourse about arts and culture in print and electronic media (television, radio, web)
- Membership in professional arts associations or unions

3. Support for Arts and Cultural Activity

- Public expenditures in support of arts and cultural activities in the nonprofit, commercial, and public sectors
- Explicit public policies about arts and culture
- Foundation expenditures in support of arts and culture in all sectors
- Volunteering and personal support of arts and cultural activity
- Integration of arts and culture into other policy areas; corresponding allocation of resources (community development, education, parks, recreation, and the like)
- Working artists

Figure 5: A three-part framework for measuring cultural vitality over time.

While the indicators are primarily quantitative, there is room for qualitative measurement as well.

To conclude, here are some suggestions for moving forward:

- It is possible to capture intrinsic aspects of the arts experience, and perhaps NAC and arts groups could do studies in this area. These could provide evidence to support ongoing advocacy efforts for the arts.

- We might need to change our mindset regarding KPIs and see them as one dimension of indicating the effectiveness of the delivery of arts groups' programmes. They need not have the finality of being absolute measures of performance but could be deployed more strategically for arts groups to continually improve or adapt to changing conditions.

- NAC can collate the qualitative and narrative data from grant reports and conduct an analysis that could yield a deeper understanding of the current arts sector.

- NAC could look into developing indicators that capture a more 360-degree view of the arts group's work over time, in order to better capture "impact".

A broader framework of measurement and a more robust incorporation of qualitative measures to capture the multifarious dimensions of arts work might enable the arts sector, funders and even artists themselves to not only track the achievement of milestones but also inform our understanding of the sector and make an even better case for arts support in Singapore.

Speaker 3: Kuo Jian Hong

Defining ambiguity

There is much overlap between what has been said by Kenneth and Audrey, and what I am going to talk about in my presentation. However, my perspective is that of an arts practitioner's.

My instincts have always been to "go out of the box". So this has been an exercise for me to find "boxes", to see where The Theatre Practice (TTP) fits in and where we do not, and also to make some sense out of what we have been doing. When I had to think of a topic for my presentation, I came up with "Defining ambiguity" as a title, because it reflects the process that I am going through.

When I was first involved in managing TTP as an arts practitioner, I experienced a "culture shock". I resisted things like Standard Operating Procedures for a long time, let alone KPIs.

What are KPIs?

"Key performance indicators", a business term, are a set of quantifiable measures that a company uses to gauge its performance over time. These metrics are used to determine a company's progress in achieving its strategic and operational goals, and also to compare a company's finances and performance against other businesses within its industry.

KPIs measure not just a company's individual performance but also its performance relative to other companies. As I dug deeper, I found some ways that a company might go about determining and measuring its own KPIs, one of which was called the SMART method:

- Is the objective Specific?
- Can you Measure progress towards that goal?
- Is the goal realistically Attainable?
- How Relevant is the goal to your organisation?
- What is the Time-frame for achieving this goal?

I asked myself these questions and came up with these answers for TTP:

- Is the objective Specific? *Yes, but it may change.*
- Can you Measure progress towards that goal? *I have been rehearsing.*
- Is the goal realistically Attainable? *Define goals.*
- How Relevant is the goal to your organisation? *We question, we explore, and we have more questions.*
- What is the Time-frame for achieving this goal? *We have an opening date, then we will start draft two.*

We art makers have to grapple most of the time with being art makers, though we are also running companies at the same time. Essentially, the latter requires things to be very fixed, defined and tangible, while art makers pride ourselves on being agile and mobile.

I want to use TTP as an example to share what we have been going through in terms of dealing with KPIs, whether they were given by NAC or negotiated.

In our 2012 and 2014 grant cycles in NAC's Major Company Scheme, we were, as Kenneth shared, assessed in four areas: (1) sustained artistic development and quality content/programmes; (2) active engagement of audience; (3) contribution to the development of the art form and/or industry; (4) sound management capabilities, improved financial sustainability, strong governance and alignment with specific sector and national outcomes.

The KPIs assigned to us were straightforward. For example, under "sustained artistic development and quality content/programmes", we indicated shows and projects we had done (e.g., Kuo Pao Kun Festival 2012) and the target number (e.g., seven ticketed productions). These were hard numbers that were then tallied for evaluation.

In 2016, however, NAC's Major Company Scheme was revised to support three tracks of artistic pursuit:

- Artmaking, that is, the creation and presentation of high-quality art (50 per cent);
- Bridging, that is, the creation of programmes that promote arts accessibility, develop new audiences and build appreciation of the arts (60 per cent);
- Intermediary, that is, the development of artists and/or the sector through advocacy, capability development or research (70 per cent).

The percentage tagged to each track gives a clear indication of what NAC prefers artists to do. Artists on the intermediary track would receive more subsidies than those on the artmaking track because there were already many of us.

As TTP's work covers all three tracks, we could have gone on a track that had more money. But because our funding was capped at 50 per cent, it did not make any difference to us. If funding had not been capped, however, there would have been the temptation for any arts group to reconsider how to get more funding, especially since we spend most of our time trying to find money.

Also, for the first time, a concrete percentage of our grant was pegged to our performance. For example, the funding KPI "50 per cent of audience members surveyed who are satisfied/very satisfied with the content" had a 20 per cent weightage. This meant that I would lose 20 per cent of my grant if I could not demonstrate to NAC that 50 per cent of my audience had a favourable response to my shows (*see Figure 6*).

This was a shock to us. In some ways, it did make everyone's job easier because we were able to show some concrete numbers that no one could dispute. But at the same time, it also felt very mechanical. It was most unsettling because it felt like I was revising junior college economics on market demand and supply, and we were being shoved into this bottom-line situation.

Another thing that surprised us was the implementation of CRR as a funding KPI. The CRR is calculated by dividing an organisation's revenue (raised income plus earned income, excluding NAC support) by its expenditure over the same period of time. Basically, it measures how viable a company is without NAC's grant, and a company's CRR performance was also pegged to a percentage of the grant received. In other words, if I am not functioning well financially, I might lose more money. This did not make a lot of sense to me.

"Going back to the roundtable topic, I think the problem is with the first part: *'Bang for the Funding Buck'. I think it is an assumption that funding must always be followed by a 'bang'."*

Figure 6: The Theatre Practice's performance indicators under the Major Company Scheme.

There was also a lot of negotiating back and forth for our funding KPIs, like buying vegetables at the market. NAC would propose a number, and we did not know how they came up with it or what they had based it on. We would then counter-propose, because we knew our situation and did not want to risk losing any money. Finally, we would settle on a number. I did not know why one number was approved while the other was not. So the question is, how do we come up with these numbers? How do we negotiate a precise number when we have no sense of direction?

Do I think there is a place for KPIs in how an arts organisation functions? Essentially, implementing KPIs is like grading a test. But how do you grade art? One could construct a rubric for grading art, but what is the basis for constructing this rubric? What is the baseline? How do we benchmark?

More importantly, we are compared to other companies on a bell curve. And if we are all on a bell curve, what does that say about our relationship with one another within the arts ecosystem? It is scary that we are thrown into a competition based on numbers, ratings and baselines that either we do not understand or are not made privy to us.

But even if we were to reject the idea of KPIs, there would still be the idea of mathematical measurement, that is, numbers, whether or not they are called KPIs.
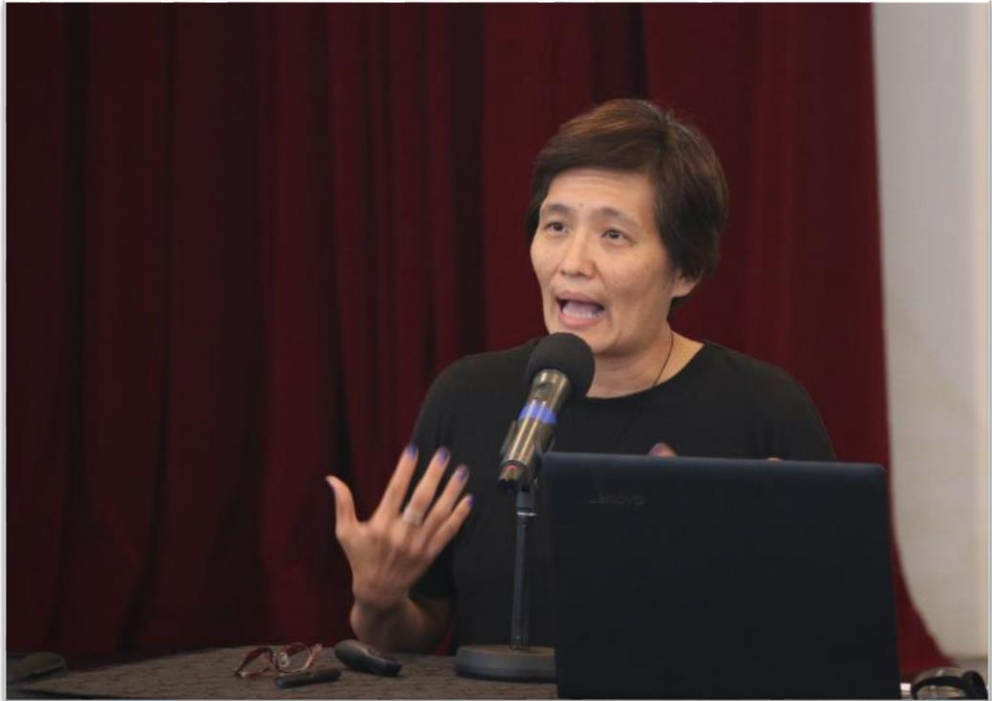
Ms Kuo speaking about The Theatre Practice's experience in dealing with KPIs.

I was recently introduced to the 2016 book *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*. In it, Yuval Noah Harari talks about the idea of "text" versus "reality", that is, what is being recorded and measured versus what is reality. For example, it does not matter whether I am being measured in kilograms or pounds, because I have a specific weight and I am tangible.

But when we measure something abstract like performance, for example, PSLE as a way of measuring students' performance in school, we know that one point means a lot and it has huge repercussions in a family. This is because, once numbers are defined, the yardstick now comes with reality. And once this reality has been established, students are going to be penalised. Likewise, teachers start teaching "testing" instead of facilitating learning.

For policymakers, this looks like accountability that can be measured in numbers. And because there is a perception of achievement, people start playing it safe. Soon, the

public buys into this yardstick. For example, the Ministry of Education has been trying to do away with school rankings, but now there is an underground ranking because people are used to the yardstick as a reality, and we cannot get rid of it. We do not know how to and do not trust a system without it.

Is this also what policymakers want to cultivate in terms of our cultural climate?

That said, I think we, as art makers, are in some ways guilty as well. When we accept funding (and the KPIs that come with it), we are actually signing a pact that we do not necessarily buy into. We are in a very passive position and, in some sense, it is short-term convenience and long-term castration.

In my opinion, the measuring of performance through concrete numbers and methodologies like KPIs does not work. But if it is not KPIs, how then do we capture the impact of the arts?

I think the word "measure" is different from "capture", like "assessment" is not the same as "evaluation". One has concrete values whereas the other tends to be more abstract and subjective.

I came across an article last year titled *"Our obsession with performance data is killing performance"*. In it, Jerry Z. Muller talks about the idea of "metric fixation", that is, how we are fixated with numbers. A quote from the article goes:

> *The key components of metric fixation are the belief that it is possible—and desirable—to replace professional judgment (acquired through personal experience and talent) with numerical indicators of comparative performance based upon standardized data (metrics); and that the best way to motivate people within these organizations is by attaching rewards and penalties to their measured performance.*

To me, the key here is the first component. I think artists are abandoning their professional judgement, acquired through personal experience and talent, and buying into the numbers.

I remember when my father was diagnosed with cancer in 2001, he delayed his operation because he had to do grant assessments for theatre companies in Hong Kong. He spent several days in Hong Kong, met with every theatre company, and talked to them to find out what they wanted, and what their vision and intentions were as artists and arts companies. Being an artist himself, my father had the domain knowledge and experience to listen to and interpret what they had to say. Most

importantly, he had two elements that were very important to being a grant assessor: optimism and trust.

Indeed, this sounds almost utopic. But at the same time, I think these are the simplest and purest qualities of an artist, and our fixation with numbers separates us from them.

So how does TTP assess ourselves as a company? How do we assess our goals? We have to listen to our fellow artmakers—their needs, strengths and weaknesses. We also have to listen to our audiences—teachers, parents, students, the public and the community—to understand what they need and what they are curious about. Lastly, we need to listen ourselves, which includes our institutional memory, an accumulation of our works, and make sense of all that from the past, present and future. We also have to assess ourselves, which includes staff assessment as well as mentor assessment, because every staff at TTP has a mentee to guide.

These things sound very messy, cumbersome and abstract, because a lot of it is based on hunch and feel. I think this was what Ms Wong talked about earlier: the tangible versus the intangible and intrinsic. I believe both sides must be given equal emphasis, if not, much more on the intangible and intrinsic, because that is the nature of our industry.

I also feel that NAC being part of MCCY is a deadly situation, because it serves the community and the youth, which is what the nation needs, but not the arts. To me, the creation of art is personal. This is not to say that art serves only one person, but that it has to come from a person. So there is a conflict here.

In my research, I found an artistic quality evaluation model called the IAN model, developed at Aarhus University, Denmark, by Karen Hannah, Jørn Langsted and Charlotte Rørdam Larsen. In this model, three vectors—intention, ability and necessity—are pulling out in different directions but are connected at the centre (*see Figure 7*). I really liked this model because, rather than providing an absolute number, it observes a dynamic and illustrates a relationship instead.
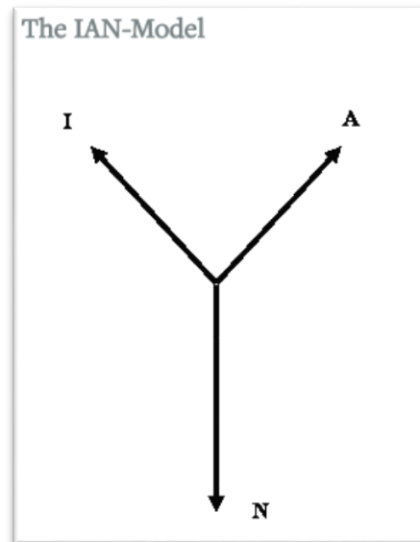
Figure 7: The IAN model, where artistic quality is determined by the interplay between intention (I), ability (A) and necessity (N).

TTP has also been trying many ways to collect data through audience feedback. But the question is, what do we do with this data? Data does not necessarily have to be interpreted through the lens of mathematical measures or KPIs. If a company's intention is to make more money or attract larger audiences, then, yes, we can use numbers as a measurement. But if this is not my intention, how can numbers be used to measure my performance?

To quote Arts Nominated Member of Parliament Kok Heng Leun in his 2016 maiden parliamentary speech, *"Our culture rewards results and success, but art promotes process and the value of failure."* The question is, how do you measure something when the point of it is not to be measured?

Going back to the roundtable topic, I think the problem is with the first part, "Bang for the Funding Buck". I think it is an assumption that funding must always be followed by a "bang".

Response 1: Emmeline Yong

I am responding from my own experiences as an arts manager, funding recipient and grant assessor in the visual arts.

In my experience, outcome measurement, when it is nuanced and meaningful, works for both the funder and the recipient. As a Seed Grant recipient, Objectifs has benefitted from our exchanges with NAC where there is dialogue before and after we submit our reports. Time is invested in working out KPIs that are relevant and realistic. But this has also come with experience, as we have learnt over time that we can negotiate and discuss.

However, in some of our own other funding experiences with NAC and other funding bodies, there is no exchange. Confusion can sometimes arise if the KPI is vague in the first place and there is no common understanding of what it entails. The frustration is more apparent for individual artists or new arts groups that I have worked with, who have less administrative or funding experience.

With that, I have three follow-up thoughts to the presentations.

KPIs for the arts cannot be a one size fits all

Currently, in the visual arts, the same grant application forms apply for artists and arts groups, from emerging up to veteran artists. This means that the perceived KPIs are the same. The artistic intent, goals and definition of success differ for different types of applicants and projects.

Within the same funding forms, artistic excellence is sometimes conflated with creativity in programming or marketing. An arts group with marketing resources might be able to tackle questions like outreach and target audience, but an individual artist might struggle on that front.

Whether KPIs are quantifiable or qualitative, they need to make sense to the type of applicant and not just art forms. As Audrey mentioned in her presentation, could the current KPIs be peer reviewed or refined to maintain relevance?

What happens after the KPIs are submitted?

My next point relates to the assessment of post funding reports. Up until two years ago, NAC used to release the names of grantees and the quantum received. I appreciated the transparency, which was not offered by other funding bodies we worked with. I would often see repeat names receiving funding. Presumably, if you are a repeat, you fulfilled your previous KPIs successfully and are a good benchmark.

As Jian Hong has mentioned, this leads to the question, since there are KPIs, of whether there are benchmarks against which the different cultural, artistic or social dimensions are measured. How are these outcomes reviewed? Are funding assessors currently interacting with practitioners of diverse backgrounds in meaningful ways that can equip them with the knowledge of how to analyse these post funding reports critically?

Ms Yong giving her response to the three presentations.

Question to put back to funders

This brings me to a third point, which responds to Audrey's comments on the perception of the finality of KPIs.

While KPIs ensure accountability, funding should be a two-way relationship where both parties want success, and should work towards an agreed common goal. If the KPIs take only a short-term view and are pre-dictated or irrelevant, the process does not help the artist or arts group learn or grow in the long run.

Perhaps, in questioning KPIs and how to achieve bang for the funding buck, we need to first reconsider the funding dynamics that exist today and what it is we want to achieve collectively.

"In my experience, outcome measurement, when it is nuanced and meaningful, works for both the funder and the recipient. But this has also come with experience, as we have learnt over time that we can negotiate and discuss."

Response 2: Vivian Wang & Cheryl Ong (The Observatory)

Some have asked us why a rock band like us can be funded by NAC's Major Company Scheme. However, The Observatory is not just a rock band. In our last two Major Company grant cycles, we have produced albums, curated a series of platforms and residencies, and experimented with anything to do with sound arts and experimental music in general.

We are quite a lean outfit. We do not have a general manager, but we split the roles of one evenly among ourselves. Today, we would like to present The Observatory as a case study of the KPIs that are imposed on a group like us, and how we mitigated some challenges. We hope this will help develop a system that works not only for us, but for other arts groups as well.

Currently, the KPIs make us feel like we are being measured on how functional and effective we are, not just as an organisation but, in fact, much like a corporation.

We are not against the idea of KPIs technically, but we do believe that the way they are implemented creates a pressurising environment, especially for experimental artists and arts groups whose chances of failure may well be nine out of ten. We also believe that measuring KPIs based on numbers is very reductive and kills creativity, as it makes us preoccupied with the possibility of losing whatever meagre resources we are already operating on.

Measuring the arts, especially experimental music, using numbers or a company's financial sustainability is somewhat in conflict with what we do. For instance, two programmes we are currently organising—one research-based and another commissioned—cannot be measured using such KPIs.

There are two parts to our KPIs. The first is "quality content of programmes and Services", where we are supposed to achieve at least a 10 per cent online engagement index, 5,600 page likes on the group's Facebook page, and 1,000 audience members attending ticketed and non-ticketed shows. The Second is "sound management capabilities and improved financial Sustainability", where we are supposed to achieve at least a 50 per cent CRR (calculated by dividing our revenue, excluding NAC support, by our expenditure over a period of time).

The conventional way to measure "audience reach and engagement" is by conducting audience surveys. However, we did not want to hand out survey forms to audience members at the end of our programmes, because we thought it might affect the group's image and because we felt it would be difficult to do so given the nature of our programmes.

So we proposed to NAC to measure our "audience reach and engagement" using Facebook page analytics of the group's Facebook posts instead. As you can see in Figure 8, based on the page analytics, the first Facebook post reached 900 people, that is, it appeared on 900 people's news feeds, and had an engagement rate of 10 per cent, that is, about 90 of the people reached "liked" or commented on the post.
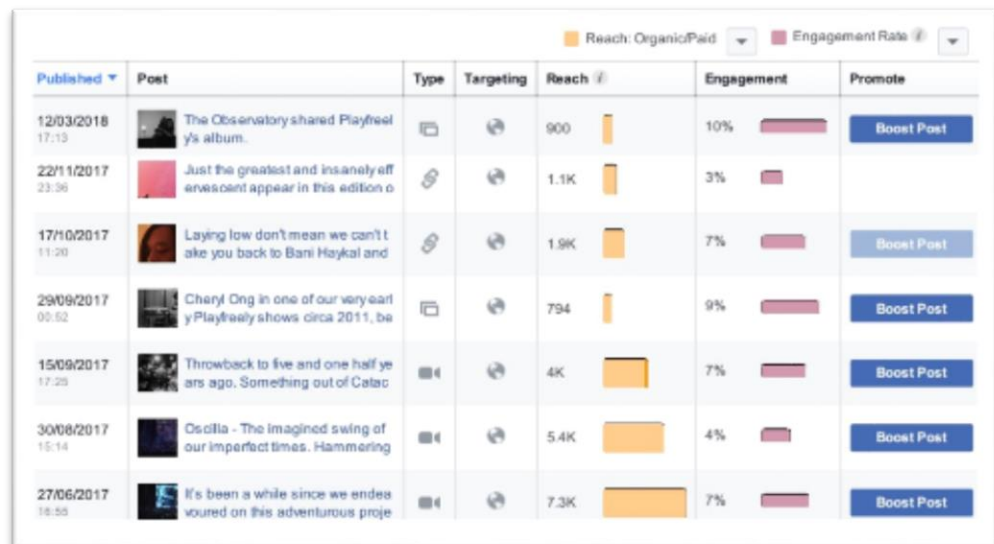
Figure 8: Facebook page analytics of The Observatory's Facebook posts.

However, this was a skewed way of measuring audience reach and engagement, because there had been situations where the average engagement rate of our posts fell in proportion because our overall number of posts had increased. In fact, we were afraid to reach more people because there is often a threshold to the number of people who would engage with a post. In other words, if we were to reach 7,000 people, for instance, we would need 700 of them to engage with our post in order to achieve our KPI of at least a 10 per cent engagement rate.

Another challenge we faced was the volatility of social media platforms. For instance, after Facebook changed its news feed algorithm last year, posts from users' Facebook friends were prioritised and were more likely to show up on their news feeds, whereas posts from Facebook pages such as The Observatory's Facebook page rarely did. Another incident was Facebook's recent data breach, which resulted in users leaving the platform. Our overall engagement plunged as a result.

Ms Wang (left) and Ms Wong (right) giving their responses to the three presentations.

To make up for the drop, we tried to make a case to NAC to let us combine the numbers from both The Observatory's main Facebook page and the Facebook event pages we create for each event, such as Playfreely (an experimental music festival). However, we then had to look at how the user demographics for these pages differed, which required us to spend a lot of time gathering more data. While such data may be interesting to us, it may not necessarily be useful. So we are also thinking of ways to better use this data and to improve our work.

The statements in black in Figure 9 are what we agreed on with NAC as our KPIs, and the statements in blue are what we achieved. As you can see, we did not meet the first two KPIs. In our report to NAC at the end of the financial year, we included press

reviews and user reviews of our programmes, but these were ultimately still not enough because, in terms of numbers and percentages, we had not met our KPIs.

It is also quite ironic that none of the KPIs in the first section, "quality content of programmes and Services", has any qualitative aspect to it. It is mostly numbers that we have to collect. For instance, "achieve at least 10 per cent online engagement index", which accounts for 20 per cent of our funding, is measured by the total number of reactions, comments and shares our Facebook posts get. We might also lose $18,000 of our funding if we do not hit 5,600 "likes" on our Facebook page.

All in all, the section on "quality content of programmes and services" accounts for 50 per cent of our total funding. So we have to focus on meeting these KPIs. However, we take a lot of risks in our work and we cannot afford to be always thinking about losing funding. What would it do to an artist if he or she is constantly thinking about this? My question is, is it possible for KPIs not to be tied to funding?

Furthermore, we would like to highlight that we spend a lot of time and effort collecting data for our KPIs. But why do artists have to do all the measuring themselves? I think, if NAC wants to measure the impact of the arts on society, they should bring in objective experts to do it.
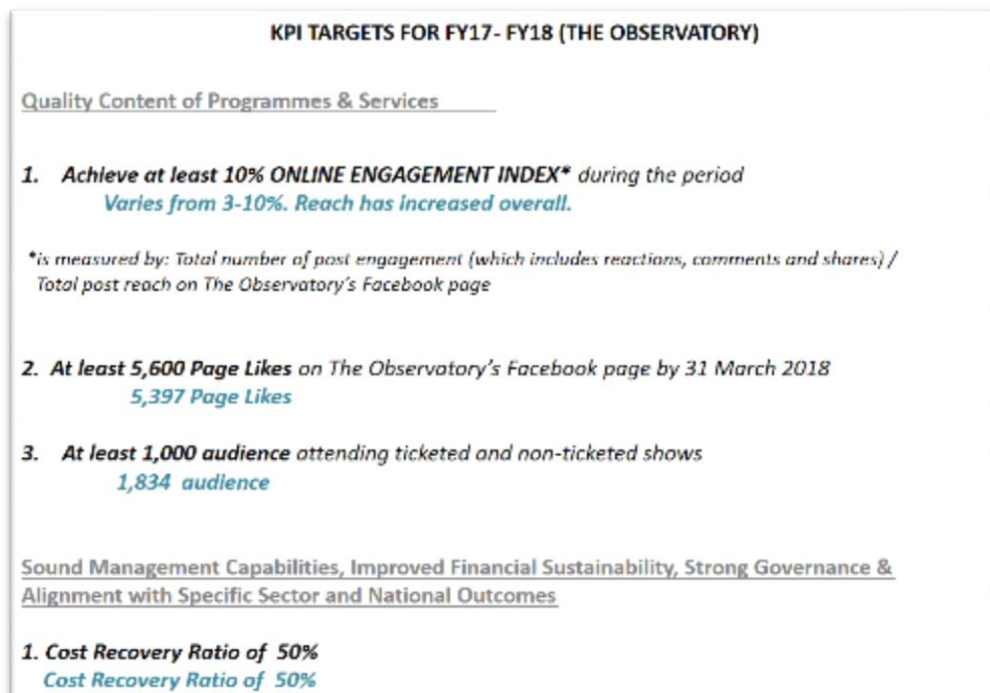
Figure 9: The Observatory's KPI targets for financial year 2017 to 2018.

We understand that NAC is constantly helping us solve issues and we are glad that NAC is always open to conversation. We can always talk to NAC to see if there is another way of measuring KPIs for a group like ourselves. For instance, we are currently discussing how to mitigate our situation so as to ensure that there is no clawback, that is, having to return part of funding received on failing to meet KPIs, and that we are able to proceed to the next tier of funding. We are also not shy about bringing up certain issues to NAC and questioning the effectiveness of certain policies. Moving forward, we have agreed to conduct audience surveys instead, because it is a lot easier compared to what we have tried to do with Facebook page analytics. However, we are also trying to have a conversation with NAC on how effective surveys are, whether it should be something that all arts groups have to do, and how the data collected would be useful to us.

"Furthermore, we would like to highlight that we spend a lot of time and effort collecting data for our KPIs. But why do artists have to do all the measuring themselves? I think, if NAC wants to measure the impact of the arts on society, they should bring in objective experts to do it."

Discussion

Before the Q&A session, Mr Kwok responded to some of the issues raised earlier.

First, he addressed the issue of professional judgement that Ms Kuo raised. He agreed that quantifiable KPIs were an insufficient form of measurement and that NAC needs to look beyond that. One example would be to include media reviews, as mentioned by The Observatory. However, he said NAC would still require some quantifiable data because of potential contentions involved when making professional judgements about an artwork. For instance, involving artists and industry practitioners in a peer review panel has limitations, as members of the arts community may question NAC's choice of judges. In short, we need to agree on how to professionally judge an artwork, he said.

Second, he said NAC has been working on offering more grant types, with each having particular requirements. For instance, artists who prefer to focus on artmaking may find the Presentation and Participation Grant more appropriate than the Major Company Scheme. NAC is also looking into offering more choices in terms of KPIs. One example is using Facebook page analytics, as mentioned by The Observatory. He added that only a small number of artists do not meet their KPIs, because KPIs are often set by the artists themselves. Artists who fail to meet them often have a significant reason, and NAC tries to understand by talking to them. In short, all KPIs should be set in conversation with NAC, he said.

Finally, he said that while a dedicated ministry for the arts was something Singapore could aspire to, NAC being part of MCCY is a positive thing because it signals an emphasis on the social value of the arts, as compared to its economic value, which had been the case in the past. However, this also meant funding for the arts is considered in terms of culture and community development.

What should be measured?

Issues relating to what should be the measures of the impact of arts funding and whether it was worthwhile were discussed.

Ms Wong stressed the importance of capturing both the artistic footprint and other aspects of an arts organisation's work in a broader and multidimensional way. This should include how an organisation changes people's lives and how it affects the arts ecosystem. She said such information has not been adequately captured and that it is time to do so, especially after decades of arts funding.

One participant also said the metrics used to measure the impact of the arts tend to be "direct" and "immediate", for instance, audience numbers and audience experience. However, she pointed out that the arts often have an indirect impact that should also be measured. For instance, an individual who can think critically and better engage his or her community as a result of engaging in the arts and culture benefits other members of the community as well, even those who did not participate in the arts directly. She urged policymakers and artists to think of ways to measure these indirect impacts.

On the issue of over-emphasising quantitative measurements, one participant felt that this not only how the impact of the arts is captured but also the personal relationships between artists and funders. She said, if artists only talked to their account manager or funders about numbers, the relationship that is forged becomes very transactional and superficial. This makes it harder for funders to understand the needs and challenges of artists.

Another participant said there tends to be a focus on measuring what arts funding has achieved but not what is missing. Thus, KPIs should also aim to measure what has not been achieved instead of solely measuring what has been achieved. He added that good policies should look at areas that are outside of their current purview and shift policymaking towards filling these gaps.

Who should measure and who should be measured?

Ms Wang raised the issue of who should measure the impact of the arts. She said the current system where artists are expected to measure the impact of their own works places a heavy burden on arts groups, especially those that are lean and do not have

huge resources to collate data and information. She also questioned whether it made sense for arts groups to measure the impact of their works by themselves, and raised the possibility that artists would not receive honest feedback from audiences if they were the ones soliciting feedback. Instead, she proposed that an external entity conduct this assessment in greater professional capacity and detail.

Another participant pointed out that artists and arts groups should also develop KPIs to measure the effectiveness of NAC as an organisation that champions the arts. They should assess whether NAC's policies and grants have been improving artists' effectiveness by creating a safe, stable and comfortable space for artists to create art. This is important so that artists can keep NAC in check, he said.

How should we measure?

Issues relating to how to better measure the impact of the arts and using new ways to measure the impact of the arts were discussed.

One participant said KPIs are relevant for organisations but not artmaking. Thus, KPIs should not include indicators related to an artistic work, such as the number of performances. Instead, artmaking should be subject to a different set of evaluation criteria that is formative in nature and measured qualitatively (rather than quantitatively) and that describes the artistic excellence of a work.

One participant said that, although the concept of KPIs is often associated with economics and corporate practices, even some economists themselves have recognised the limitations of KPIs as a form of measurement. She quoted economist Charles Goodhart, who said, "When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure." This is also now known as Goodhart's Law. In other words, numerical measurements are useful when they are representative or indicative of something. But once a number becomes a target, the value and effectiveness of this number as a measurement ceases to exist. She stressed that even measures have limits, and they reach their limits when they become targets. In response, both Mr Tan and Ms Wong suggested that perhaps KPIs should be seen and used as a diagnostic tool, rather than as a target or to judge an outcome. Ms Wong also encouraged both arts groups and NAC to device such diagnostic tools to measure things they would like to keep track of internally.

One participant proposed a new way of measuring the impact of the arts that is borrowed from the discipline of anthropology. She said she uses the method of "thick description" from anthropology in her work with voluntary welfare organisations and community partners to measure what is valuable. Four different dimensions are used: personal, social, cognitive and cultural. This allows for common ground and language between funders and artists to document and locate the value of the arts. She also pointed out that the impact of the arts in Singapore is not solely the effort of NAC and that we should not overlook the contributions of privately funded art.

There was also discussion on how new ways of measuring the impact of the arts can indirectly shed light on how to improve other aspects of an art organisation's work. For instance, Ms Wong said it would be useful to analyse The Observatory's Facebook page analytics to understand why certain Facebook posts received higher engagement than others, which can in turn be used to devise more effective social media strategies for the group.

Why should we measure?

One participant said he did not believe in the idea of having KPIs at all, and that it is an assumption that KPIs are a must-have, as many private organisations disburse funding with no strings attached. He said grant bodies should only ask whether a particular activity or organisation is desirable for society, and whether it is commercially viable and can survive on its own. If it can, no funding is required. But if not, funding should be given without the need for any KPIs since it is desirable for society. In response, Mr Tan asked how then the government justifies its expenditure to the public. The participant countered by saying that many other domains, such as defence and education, do not need any justification because society has agreed that they are important and necessary. These are thus funded without the need for KPIs or any justification. The same goes for the arts, he said.

Another participant agreed and said the narrative about the value of the arts in Singapore has only shifted from economic to social benefits, but not yet to the arts as beneficial in itself. He argued that the arts is not about following the logic of capitalism, but rather about challenging, questioning and disrupting it. While he acknowledged that there have been ongoing conversations between NAC and the arts community, much of these conversations still follow a logic of instrumentalism. Ms Wong agreed with the participant that Singapore's national discourse has always been instrumental

even beyond issues relating to the arts and culture. She was sceptical that this would change, and said artists need to be more vocal about advocating for the intrinsic benefits of the arts.

In response, Mr Tan said that, if the Minister of Culture could state in Parliament that the arts is good in itself because it is art, and that there is no need to justify the utility of the arts in instrumental terms, this would also change the tenor of the discourse. This would, in turn, change how NAC engages with the arts community and the Ministry of Finance. While Mr Kwok agreed that Singapore should aspire to reach a stage where society does not need to justify the arts, he disagreed that this can be achieved by the Minister of Culture simply stating such a position on public record. Instead, the onus is on members of the arts community to become ambassadors of that vision. He added that NAC believes that the arts is an integral and fundamental right, and will continue to work together with the arts community on this journey.

Greater clarity on the implications of grants

One participant raised the issue of needing greater clarification on the implications of grants in addition to the specific requirements and conditions that come with these grants. For instance, he asked if companies on Major Grants necessarily have to become Institutions of Public Character (IPCs) after a certain period of time. Being a new recipient of the grant, he felt that this was the case even though such a condition was not explicitly stated as part of the contract. Mr Tan agreed that grant recipients are often unaware of the implications of receiving a grant. Based on his personal experience of being on the Seed Grant assessment panel, for instance, he said many applicants were unaware that, as a Seed Grant recipient, it would be very costly to wind up a company because of the administrative and legal overload.

In response, Ms Wong said that the issue of arts groups not being fully aware of the implications of a grant is especially scary for young artists and smaller arts groups. This is because not meeting KPIs can result in clawback of funding. She said artists need to do their due diligence to find out the conditions attached to grants. At the same time, NAC needs to put out better information to help artists be more informed of the implications of grants.

Punitive effects of clawback

One participant said the Singapore government is very prudent as any policy that requires spending tends to be narrowly defined so that the funding is always justified. However, the KPIs that NAC imposes on arts groups have been so narrowly defined that they have become punitive. Many artists have told him they were being punished by the KPIs as they were constantly worried about the threat of losing funding if these KPIs were not met. He added that arts groups usually take a few years to develop a work, and such fears do not contribute to a safe and comfortable environment for creating art.

Another participant pointed out that the punitive nature of the KPIs is worsened by the fact that the KPIs often do not consider the unique situation of individual arts groups. She said arts organisations may not mature at the same rate, and gave examples of three theatre companies—The Necessary Stage, Drama Box and Theatre Ekamatra—that are at very different stages in their evolution despite having approximately 30 years of history. The reasons include having different target audiences and stakeholders and taking different positions in the scene. For instance, a theatre company might have to set lower ticket prices because its target audience may not be so well-off. This, in turn, affects the company's income and thus their CRR performance. In short, the clawback experienced as a result of being in a bad financial state worsens the situation, as pointed out earlier by Ms Kuo. Thus, such factors should also be considered when thinking about including CRR as part of KPIs, she said.

In response, Mr Kwok proposed thinking about KPIs as conversation starters instead of punitive measures. For instance, if artists are unable to meet certain KPIs, NAC can have a conversation with them to better understand their situation and then highlight the issues to the auditors. However, he also cautioned against creating an impression that artists can simply "negotiate their problems away" as funding cannot be given out without any accountability. He stressed that coming to a new understanding through conversation and negotiation is how KPIs should be approached. He also hoped that the conversation about meeting KPIs can move beyond issues of funding to consider improving other supportive structures within the arts ecosystem, such as cultivating philanthropists and nurturing better arts managers. He said the pressures that KPIs have on artists currently may be eased if these supportive structures can be improved.

Ms Kuo pointed out that, although NAC and artists can have conversations about meeting (or not meeting) KPIs, we should also keep in mind that certain artists and arts groups, such as those who have fewer resources and less experience, may be in a weaker position to negotiate with NAC as compared to those who have more resources and more experience.

Tension between artmaking and organisational development

One participant from an experimental theatre company on NAC's Seed Grant spoke about the tension between artmaking and organisational development. Her research on the management challenges of small non-profit theatre companies shows that these companies often experience a stark difference between their mission as an arts group and the meeting of KPIs. As a result, they often have to divert precious resources, time and energy into managing the organisation to meet those KPIs, which may or may not be congruent with their mission as an arts company.

A participant who is from a small experimental music group also spoke about this tension. She said its KPIs include achieving charitable and later IPC status, failing which it will lose $15,000 of conditional funding. Such KPIs suggest that NAC is trying to steer arts companies towards finding non-NAC funding, such as private funding, corporate sponsorships and foundation money. While it would be ideal to depend less on NAC project grants, getting there creates tension between organisational development and artmaking. For instance, she often faced a dilemma between putting resources to develop professional work as artists and hiring more managers to grow the organisation, which in itself brings about a new set of challenges.

Addressing the conditions of Major Grants specifically, she added that perhaps the idea of the three tracks (artmaking, bridging and intermediary) could be redefined because the tracks may determine the KPIs imposed. As the Major Grant aims to support organisational development, factors such as human resource competencies, financial competencies and how an organisation operates and plans for development should be considered when formulating KPIs. Whether an arts company does artmaking, is an intermediary or serves a bridging role should be a secondary consideration. In short, funds disbursed through the Major Grant are dedicated to organisational development and should thus be accompanied by relevant KPIs that do not pertain to artmaking. In response, Mr Kwok said the idea of having three different tracks for arts groups to choose from is NAC's way of trying to build more

customisation into the system, specifically to enable artists to customise their KPIs according to the type of work they do.

Lack of bridging support between Seed Grant and Major Grant

A participant said her company is on a Seed Grant which expires soon and wondered whether her company would be able to receive the Major Grant. This is because the Major Grant awards are highly dependent on organisational development, which runs contrary to artmaking (as mentioned in the earlier subsection). In fact, she is discouraged to apply for the Major Grant in the first place due to immense competition from larger, established companies with substantial administrative structures and manpower. However, she questioned whether such companies should be allowed to continue receiving government funding when they have the means to sustain themselves through other sources of funding. While NAC has suggested that companies like themselves can take up project grants instead of Major Grants, there are other challenges as well.

First, being an existing Seed Grant company, her company will not be able to apply for grants until the Seed Grant expires. This meant that they are not "guaranteed" a project grant in the next financial year in the event that they are not supported by the Major Grant. Second, as the Seed Grant had given her resources to develop the organisation, she now has overheads to cover, such as rent and human resource costs. Without a grant like the Major Grant, her efforts in building up the organisation will come to naught as she will have to let go of full-time staff and perhaps downscale operations. This does not help build up new, younger companies, she said. She suggested that NAC think about how to fill this "gap" between the Seed Grant and the Major Grant. Perhaps another scheme could be offered to Seed Grant companies to help them transition organically, should they not take the Major Grant route.

In response, Mr Kwok stressed that NAC does not view the Major Grant as a "pinnacle" for all arts companies. An arts group that does not wish to become a full company and that wants to remain purely an arts maker can continue on project grants after their Seed Grant has expired. Similar to the idea of having three different tracks (artmaking, bridging and intermediary), Mr Kwok said NAC is trying to cater to differences and arts groups at different stages of development and provide more customisation and differentiation by having different grant types for different arts groups.

About the Speakers

KUO Jian Hong is Artistic Director of The Theatre Practice and an award-winning theatre director, lighting and set designer, film/television director and producer, and independent filmmaker. She has always taken on multifaceted creative roles within the arts. She is best known for the incubation and high-quality staging of local Chinese musical productions, including *If There're Seasons...*, *Lao Jiu: The Musical* and *Liao Zhai Rocks!* These phenomenal works have brought new audiences to the theatres and nurtured a talented group of professionals involved both onstage and behind the scenes.

Meanwhile, her passion for musical theatre and advocacy for the development of theatre for young audiences have led her to direct critically acclaimed family-friendly works such as *Day I Met the Prince* and *The Wee Question Mark* series. This has also led to her spearheading the *Nursery Rhymes Project*, a three-part initiative that seeks to rejuvenate the love for Chinese nursery rhymes amongst children today. Ms Kuo's commitment to storytelling in theatre also includes experimental ventures. Her work *Blank Run* was invited to the World Stage Design in Taipei, where it received highly favourable responses from an international audience. Earlier this year, she led an international team of artists for *I Came at Last to the Seas*, the first ever full commission undertaken by a local theatre company for the Esplanade Theatre by Huayi—Chinese Festival of Arts. Most recently, she directed *Four Horse Road*, a theatrical experience that took the audience through three historical buildings, excavating untold stories from 140 years of Waterloo Street's past.

Kenneth KWOK is Assistant Chief Executive at the National Arts Council. He oversees the Planning Group, which includes the Strategic Planning, International Relations, and Research teams; as well as the council's policies and programmes for arts engagement, covering the children, education, youth, family, senior, community, disability, and social sectors. He was formerly a Language, Literature and Drama teacher at the secondary school level, Vice Principal, and Assistant Director of Curriculum Policy with the Ministry of Education. In his personal capacity, he has been involved as an educator and facilitator in various community arts projects with different arts groups over the years.

He also covered Singapore theatre and dance as a reviewer and co-editor for *The Flying Inkpot* from 1999 to 2015. He has served as Adjunct Lecturer in Educational Drama with the National Institute of Education, and as a board or advisory committee member for the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, Singapore National Youth Orchestra, The Little Arts Academy, Very Special Theatrics, and *SCAPE. Mr Kwok has an Ed.M. in Arts in Education and is currently pursuing an MA in Creative Writing.

Cheryl ONG is a Singaporean percussionist who is currently active in music performance and education. She regularly performs with avant rock group The Observatory. The group's name implies passive objectivity but really describes a band whose musical output is an impassioned response to the society it is enmeshed in, a society divided, a society in tumult, where new forms of oppression must be actively met with new strategies for resistance. The heart and soul of The Observatory is in its constant reinvention. Though classically trained, Ms Ong struggled with the fact that classical and traditional music has constantly been divided and limited to its roles. Tired of being a mere technician, she has gone on to explore improvisational and experimental practices, hunting down new ideas and sounds. She is always up for playing, bucking trends and going for broke.

TAN Tarn How is Adjunct Senior Research Fellow in the Arts, Culture and Media research cluster at the Institute of Policy Studies. His research areas are in arts and cultural policy and media and Internet policy. He has written on the development of the arts in Singapore, particularly on partnerships between the people and the private and public sectors, on the creative industries in Singapore, China and Korea, on cultural policy in Singapore, and on arts censorship. His research interests include arts education and the role of education in cultural and human development. He has also carried out research on the management and regulation of media in Singapore, on the impact of the Internet and social media on society, on the role of new and old media in the 2008 Malaysian election and the 2006 and 2011 Singapore elections, and on the way in which the Internet and social media have influenced the development of civil society and democratic development.

He is working on a book titled *Flourishing Life*, which examines issues arising from instrumental economics-oriented thinking in politics, society and education and which argues for more comprehensive and humanist indices of development and

education achievement. He was a journalist for nearly one and half decades before joining IPS. He has also been a teacher and television scriptwriter and is a playwright and arts activist.

Vivian WANG was a classical pianist who diverged from much of her formal training when she started avant rock outfit The Observatory in 2001. A TV producer-presenter for arts and travel documentaries as well as a film and TV producer, Ms Wang has focused solely on music performance and art since 2008. She also indulges her passion for theatre and film as a music composer and sound designer. Her current field focuses on experimental collaboration, The Observatory's staple experimental music festival Playfreely, as well as composition and sound design for films and other media.

Audrey WONG is Head of the School of Creative Industries, LASALLE College of the Arts, and leads the M.A. Arts and Cultural Management programme at the college. She has been teaching arts management and cultural policy for more than 10 years. She was formerly Artistic Co-Director of independent space The Substation, where she produced various arts projects and festivals, organised international exchanges in visual and performing arts and launched the Associate Artist programme. In 1997, she established the Moving Images Film Programme at The Substation.

She has served on the boards of the Singapore Art Museum and NAC and on the ACSR Committee and is currently on the board of Nine Years Theatre. From 2009 to 2011, she served as the first Nominated Member of Parliament for the arts in Singapore. In 2013, she was a recipient of NAC's Cultural Fellowship and undertook research on capacity building for young arts managers.

Emmeline YONG is Co-Founder and Director of Objectifs – Centre for Photography and Film. Established in 2003, Objectifs is a non-profit visual arts space that presents a year-round programme aimed at fostering dialogue and advancing the practice and appreciation of photography and film. She continues to oversee the artistic direction and management of the centre. Emmeline received her degrees from the University of Pennsylvania in Management (B.Sc. Economics, The Wharton School) and Economics (B.A., College of Arts and Sciences).

Appendix

Notes for IPS-SAM Roundtable on Bang for the Funding Buck:

KPIs and Capturing the Impact of the Arts

I.   Statistics published on National Arts Council (NAC) website

1.   Population Survey on the Arts 2015

   a.   Looked at: (1) changing perceptions of the arts; (2) interest in arts and culture; (3) digital consumption; (4) attendance; (5) motivations for arts attendance; and (6) barriers to attendance.

   b.   Key finding: 41 per cent of respondents said they were interested in the arts and culture, a 13 percentage point increase from 2013.

2.   Singapore Cultural Statistics 2017

   a.   Provides yearly data on: (1) attendance of ticketed and non-ticketed arts events; (2) total number of arts and cultural organisations and societies; (3) number of grassroots performing arts courses and interest groups; (4) enrolment in tertiary arts courses and students in arts CCAs; (5) monetary contribution to arts and culture and government funding; and (6) economic contributions of the arts and cultural sector.

   b.   Key changes: Attendance of non-ticketed arts events hit a record high of 9.2 million in 2016, up from 8.9 million in 2015, but attendance of ticketed events dropped from 1.9 million to 1.8 million despite an increase in ticketed events. Visitors to national museums and heritage institutions also increased from 3.8 million to 5.1 million.

3.   National Literary Reading and Writing Survey 2015

   a.   Looked at: (1) reading, buying and writing habits; (2) attitudes towards reading; and (3) attendance of literary events.

   b.   Key findings: 25 per cent of respondents said they had read a book by a local writer; fewer than 20 per cent were aware of local literary events such as *Read! Singapore*.

4.   National Music Consumption Survey 2017

   a.   Looked at Singaporeans' consumption of local and non-local music.

   b.   Key finding: 93 per cent listened to music daily, but only 8 per cent listened to local music daily.

5. Youth Arts Qualitative Study 2011

   a. A one-off study to understand: (1) why young working adults participated in the arts; and (2) how to encourage them to continue participating.

   b. Key findings: Exposure to the arts in school and a supportive social milieu led to positive views of the arts. After leaving school, however, family and work commitments resulted in decreased participation.

6. Arts for Ageing Well 2016

   a. Looked at: (1) perceived benefits from arts attendance and participation; and (2) how seniors engaged in the arts.

   b. Key findings: Seniors who had been exposed to an art form saw a 4 per cent improvement in their quality of life, a 3 per cent improvement in their physical health and cognitive functioning, and a 4 per cent increase in social support.

7. Arts and Culture Employment Study 2016

   a. Looked at: (1) demographics of workers in the arts sector; (2) their reasons for entering the sector; (3) their career goals; (4) their reasons for staying in the arts; and (5) their satisfaction level and whether they intend to leave the industry.

   b. Key findings: 75 per cent were satisfied with their careers and only 2 per cent intended to leave the arts sector.

II.   Different ways of measuring the impact of the arts

The following three (not mutually exclusive) schemes provide different ways for measuring the impact of the arts:

1. Measuring the impact of the arts on different domains of life. *(See Joshua Guetzkow's "How the arts impact communities: An introduction to the literature on arts impact studies" published in 2002) and Arts Council England's "The value of arts and culture to people and society" published in 2014.)*

   a. Economy, e.g., economic contributions from increased tourists

   b. Society, e.g., increased volunteerism and civic participation, stronger community cohesion and national identity

   c. Health and wellbeing, e.g., encouraging healthy lifestyles and contributing to mental and physical wellbeing

  d. Education, e.g., increased cultural literacy and cognitive abilities

2. Measuring the impact of the arts on learning outcomes. *(See Arts Council England's "Inspiring learning for all: An improvement framework for the arts and culture sector.")*

  a. Knowledge and understanding, e.g., learning facts and drawing connections

  b. Skills, e.g., physical skills, social skills and communication skills

  c. Attitudes and values, e.g., increased motivation, increased capacity for tolerance

  d. Inspiration and creativity, e.g., innovative thoughts, exploration and experimentation

  e. Behaviour and progression, e.g., change in the way people manage their lives

3. Measuring the impact of an individual's encounter with the arts. *(See Alan S. Brown and Jennifer L. Novak-Leonard's "Measuring the intrinsic impacts of arts attendance" in Cultural Trends, published in 2013.)*

  a. Captivation, e.g., degree to which an individual is engrossed

  b. Emotional resonance, e.g., type of emotional response and degree of intensity

  c. Social bonding and social bridging, e.g., sense of connectedness, sense of belonging to community

  d. Aesthetic growth and validation, e.g., exposure to new forms of art

  e. Intellectual stimulation, e.g., personal and social dimensions of cognitive development

III Measuring the impact of funding on policy goals

1. Should NAC provide a conceptual framework for assessing the impact of funding? What should be measured, what can be measured, and what can be efficiently measured?

2. Within government itself, how can the impact of funding on policy goals be measured, both over the short and long terms? These goals include achieving excellence, nurturing new artists, research, content creation and audience development. They are enabled by the different types of grants: (1) Seed Grant; (2) Major Company Scheme; (3) Creation Grant; (4) Production Grant; (5) Presentation and Participation Grant; (6) Market and Audience Development Grant; and (7) Arts Fund.

3. Similarly, how can the overall effectiveness of the funding for different art forms (e.g., music, dance, theatre, visual arts, and literary arts) be measured? *(See Jennifer Novak-Leonard, Patience E. Baach, Alexandria Schultz, Betty Farrell, Will Anderson and Nick Rabkin's "The changing landscape of arts participation: A synthesis of literature and expert interviews" published in 2014.)*

4. How can we untangle the impact of the arts from the impact of other sources? For example, how does NAC measure the impact of the arts on social cohesion as compared to efforts in national education and the work of the People's Association?

5. Do KPIs solely measure the impact of the arts or do they also shape and define the arts?

6. Should we go beyond participation numbers and measure degree of participation, such as co-option into the creative process, co-development of the creative process and community ownership of the arts?

7. How can we measure the impact of the arts outside of formal participation and traditional spaces, such as ground-up initiatives and new means of cultural participation through digital technologies? *(See Jennifer Novak-Leonard, Patience E. Baach, Alexandria Schultz, Betty Farrell, Will Anderson and Nick Rabkin's "The changing landscape of arts participation: A synthesis of literature and expert interviews" published in 2014.)*

8. Should we also measure the negative impact of the arts, in the form of noise pollution, extra expenditure on security for large events and the gentrification of poor neighbourhoods, for example? *(See Arts Council England's "The value of arts and culture to people and society" published in 2014.)*

Compiled by Shawn Goh and Goh Wei Hao