

Time Well Spent

LESSONS LEARNED FROM
THE IRENE TAYLOR TRUST MUSIC IN PRISONS'
EVALUATIONS OF MUSIC PROGRAMMES IN PRISONS



Published by The Irene Taylor Trust in 2005
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0-9552151-0-2
978-0-9552151-0-0

TIME WELL SPENT

Introduction

This publication celebrates the end of an 18-month research project, funded by the Wates Foundation, focused on a music and drama project with a group of mixed-age and mixed-category women at HMP Bullwood Hall in Essex.

Time Well Spent attempts to share some of the key lessons learned from the evaluations of the Irene Taylor Trust (Music in Prisons') programmes of music projects over 6 years. It draws on two evaluations from projects in women's prisons and refers to two further evaluations of projects in male prisons:

- Fair 2005 – HMP Bullwood Hall and HMP Holloway (2004-5)
- Fair's Fair 2000 – HMP Askham Grange
- All in my Century 2000 – HMP Frankland
- Julius Caesar 1999 – HMP Bullingdon

Time Well Spent gives a sense of the learning and the journeys made by the participants, the creative team, the prison regime and the researchers.

It follows the journey of all projects from the excitement of the initial idea or invitation; the hard work of planning and preparation; the building of relationships and trust; the stages of working together creatively; the sheer energy needed to stay with difficulties and challenges; the fears and exhilaration of performances; and finally the reflections, learning and striving for further opportunities and sustainability.

Time Well Spent is divided into three sections:

Section 1 gives the framework and background to the work, the research and evaluation criteria and the funding of the Irene Taylor Trust (Music in Prisons) programmes.

Section 2 follows the almost chronological course of the projects, highlighting the range of experiences and insights of those involved. It reflects the evidence from the in-depth evaluations, as well as identifying the key factors and issues.

Section 3 provides additional information on the Irene Taylor Trust (Music in Prisons) and its resources.



Introduction - The Irene Taylor Trust (Music In Prisons)

The Irene Taylor Trust (Music in Prisons) runs intensive high quality music and cross-arts projects in prisons and other secure facilities throughout the UK to provide positive experiences for individuals and help in the process of rehabilitation, education and the forming of life skills. In the 10 years since its inauguration, the Trust has delivered more than 75 different projects in over 40 establishments, working with nearly 1300 men, women and young people. Outcomes have shown that participants greatly benefit from having an opportunity for self-expression, and that their sense of self-worth and confidence increases greatly.

The individuals with whom the Irene Taylor Trust (Music in Prisons) works are some of the most socially disadvantaged, having faced a range of problems such as exclusion from school, abuse, drug abuse, mental health problems and homelessness. Despite attempts to reform offenders, statistics show that 61% of prisoners are re-convicted within two years of being released and the re-conviction rate for male young adults under 21 over the same period is 73%. The Social Exclusion Unit has calculated that re-offending by ex-prisoners costs society at least £11 billion per year and that basic skills learning can contribute to a reduction in re-offending of around 12%. It is these basic and life skills which Music in Prisons encourages participants to develop, by enabling them to build their self-confidence and learn valuable team-working and participatory skills. The informal learning opportunity which the projects provide is of particular value to the large numbers of prisoners who struggle with conventional educational methods.

TIME WELL SPENT

The 'Fair' project lasted for 3 weeks. The positive effects, the lessons learned, the unlocking of creative potential and ways of evaluating the positive side will hopefully last longer. This is by no means a completed task. Perhaps instead it can be viewed as a springboard for sharing the successful outcomes of many more Music in Prisons and combined art-form projects, demonstrating the effects through the voices of participants, project workers and audiences. The models are flexible and kaleidoscopic and are a simple way to depict and describe changes in attitudes and turning points. These too are experimental and open to change.

The aim of both the artistic interventions and the research is to gain a greater understanding of the role of music and associated art forms, in the rehabilitation of offenders and in particular with women, who are under-represented in prison service findings on resettlement and re-offending. Conducting longitudinal research is both highly beneficial yet also frustrating. The good rapport developed during and post-project between the participants, the prison and researchers, coupled with some positive and unexpected outcomes of projects, has facilitated a correspondence with some of the participants keen to build on their artistic skills and new-found confidence.

However, as with all research there is an 'ease of passage' in some instances and the obvious need to explore new ways of gaining information in others. The report finds that the nature of conducting 'hard' research in prisons and the hurdles that researchers need to overcome to succeed must be constantly addressed.

This publication shows that the worth of the projects on a personal level is not in question. However, more work and adequate support is needed from the prison service in order to present the hard outcomes in a way that will eventually see the arts fully integrated into prison life and ultimately affording the much needed opportunity to change lives, alter attitudes and tackle crime at a grassroots level.



Research and Evaluation



RESEARCH

The Irene Taylor Trust (ITT) has been committed to a programme of research and evaluation running in parallel with their programmes of projects in prisons. The research programme has been informed by asking how can organisations like ITT and the many organisations working in criminal justice settings today demonstrate that, apart from the immediate impact of producing quality work of artistic merit, the arts can and do:

- provide meaningful routes into learning
- challenge offending behaviour
- help participants to leave prison with more than the stigma of having been there.

With support from the Wates Foundation, ITT was commissioned to evaluate the effects of the arts through robust longitudinal research, based on clearly laid out objectives, which took as its starting point a long-term project with young women at HMP YO1 Bullwood Hall.

COLLABORATION

Pivotal to the research has been that ITT's formerly more flexible approach to measuring outcomes should aim to tie in with developments in applying more robust research methodologies as pioneered by the fledgling Research into the Arts and Criminal Justice Think Tank (REACTT).

REACTT is working in conjunction with Arts Council England (ACE), the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS).

By working in tandem with REACTT, ITT has aimed to ensure a clear understanding of the expected outcomes between all parties. These include the project participants, prison governors, education staff, officers and artists from ITT and the National Youth Theatre.

AIMS

- to help a group of mixed-aged women prisoners cope positively with their period of confinement through learning new skills and by providing a range of creative experiences
- to help prepare the women for resettlement in society
- to produce a quality production to benefit the prison, inmates' families and other community groups.

EMERGING MODELS

The research has become an integral part of the projects. The researchers aimed to include the inmates and staff in the evaluation process, which necessitated forming good working relationships within the community from the outset, enabling the sharing of information, through informal discussions, focus groups and diary notes. Where there were language barriers and literacy problems, the researchers encouraged older participants to assist with diary writing and discussions by working alongside younger participants.

The researchers believed that developing these relationships with inmates, staff and the artistic team was a key element in the evaluation. It provided a means of reflecting on the issues and challenges that arose from the research and adapting the methodologies on a day-by-day basis within the boundaries laid out in the preliminary stage. This personal approach enabled the researchers to acquire a variety of information, both qualitative and quantitative.

ISSUES

The original plan to work with REACTT and conduct quantitative, scientifically based tests (including psychometric tests) was carefully considered. Members of REACTT benefited from visiting the Fair project, discussing aims and objectives with Bullwood Hall's personnel, and comparing this intervention to others within similar establishments. REACTT's feasibility study on the impact of arts in criminal justice settings is on-going and ITT looks forward to the publication of its five-year study in 2008. The researchers are in no doubt that their current findings have influenced REACTT ideology with respect to the use and value of a social scientific approach to evaluation.

- research objectives should be clearly stated to participants to avoid concerns regarding accessing prison records.
- whereas robust methods, such as control groups, 'number-crunching' and psychometric testing became a barrier to the research process, post-project focus groups with project participants revealed that throughout the project period there had been a distinct reduction in cases of self-harming.
- where consent to access prison records is not granted, alternative methods should be considered which would be equally valid.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Trust's first in-depth evaluation of the Julius Caesar project in HMP Bullingdon in 1999 focused on the project's short and long-term effects, over nine months.

The evaluation involved:

- participants
- artistic (project) team
- prison staff
- audience.

The evaluation would be from:

- an artistic perspective
- a psychological perspective
- a behavioural perspective.

A matrix of information on the short- and long-term positive and negative effects of the projects on the participants and the prison regimes has been built up. This has both informed the design and delivery of future projects and contributed to the body of evidence and emerging models for evaluation for the sector.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGIES

The framework for evaluation methodologies set by the Trust with Julius Caesar in 1999 was consolidated and developed over subsequent projects and it consists of:

- discussion groups
- questionnaires
- diaries
- group notebooks
- participant logs
- prison adjudication sheets
- semi-structured interviews
- artists' notebooks/diaries.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Post-Project Outcomes

A post-project focus group with the participants undertaken by the researchers demonstrated the following outcomes one week after the last performance:

- 100% of participants said they had learnt a new skill
- 100% felt they had made new friends
- 100% would be encouraged to participate in future artistic opportunities
- all participants were given certificates from ITT and NYT (and copies of the certificates were given to family members)
- 9 completed diaries earned participants accreditations in Exploring Performance Level 1
- for 11 of the women this was their first performance experience
- all participants were given a CD and DVD as a reminder of the project
- only 2 participants welcomed friends and families to a performance

In addition, for many of the inmates this was a unique opportunity to work with not only mixed offender categories but across an age range of 17 to 48 years.

The Wider Impact of Fair

- the project and the work of ITT has attracted interest from groups within the Criminal Justice arena and other arts organisations
- a handbook of courses for offenders and ex-offenders has been produced by ITT that will serve as a toolkit for signposting young people towards arts organisations on release
- BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour programme generated national interest
- Arts Professional published an article, 'The impact of Arts on Offenders' (Issue no.89, January 2005), which has subsequently attracted much attention
- a follow up article in Arts Professional written by the Anne Peaker Centre for Arts in Criminal Justice alluded to the findings of the Irene Taylor Trust research to date and the potential impact of the arts to reduce rates of self-harm
- the findings of Fair have been discussed at forums and conferences that support this sector
- the International Festival of Music Theatre proposes to reprise the show as part of its programme of events in 2006

RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE

The findings from the first phase of the longitudinal research for Fair used the following research evidence:

- comments and anecdotal evidence
- questionnaires from participants, control groups and from the prison staff and audiences
- diary notes from participants, from the Project Team and from the researchers.

What good are the Arts? by Professor John Carey

Faber and Faber, 2005

In his sceptical and devastatingly intelligent assessment of the true value of art, Professor John Carey, one of the country's most eminent reviewers and academics, notes how the art world has paid almost no attention to how active participation in the arts alters people. He then continues: "An exception to this is the small, specialised section of the art-world who take art into prisons". He then cites the Julius Caesar project, quoting the significance of the Prison Adjudication Sheets which revealed that "those that took part showed a 58 % reduction in offending behaviour from six months before to six months following the project". (p 159-160)



Funding



ITT places enormous value on positive relationships with funders and over the past 10 years has been fortunate enough to receive ongoing support from a number of funding bodies. Working closely together with funders to plan programmes of work allows the Trust to gain from the broader experience and awareness which funders often have, whilst offering them an important insight into the mechanics of running projects and how things are working on the ground. It also allows the Trust to ensure that both its goals and the goals of funders are achieved synonymously.

“I look forward to working with you once again and congratulate you on your continued perseverance when working with the prison service to recognise the importance of music. Music touches everyone’s lives whether they consciously realise it or not. I am sure every inmate and practitioner will benefit hugely from the experience.”

Funder 2002.

“The projects are clearly having a hugely positive impact on the participants and the media coverage must be rewarding for them too.”

Funder 2004.

“It was great to be involved with the Irene Taylor Trust and wonderful to see such positive outcomes.”

Funder 2004.

1

2

3

4

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1 TIME WELL SPENT

devising

2 TIME WELL SPENT

planning and preparation

3 TIME WELL SPENT

building relationships

4 TIME WELL SPENT

doing the projects

5 TIME WELL SPENT

with the participants

6 TIME WELL SPENT

working with staff

7 TIME WELL SPENT

working with the challenges

8 TIME WELL SPENT

learning

9 TIME WELL SPENT

building the evidence

10 TIME WELL SPENT

on sustainability

6

7

8

9

10

rationale/ideas/suitability/accessibility

logistics/funding/practicalities/time

trust/respect/communication/invitation

engagement/practice/achievement/rehearsal/performance/reflection

relating/supporting/change and effects/journeys

partnership/support/involvement/commitment

resistance/obstacles/failures/commitment

what worked/what didn't/questioning/listening

research/evaluation/criteria/hard evidence/collaboration

partnerships/continuity/new opportunities/working with CJS agendas

1

TIME WELL SPENT

The Trust responds to requests from prisons, and devises projects in partnership with them, which will challenge and stimulate participants through exposing them to high quality arts activities. Projects are extremely varied, but with the focus always on the people taking part.



Key factors:

- Rationale
- Ideas
- Suitability
- Accessibility

RATIONALE

2005 marks a decade since the Irene Taylor Trust (ITT) was first set up to carry out high quality music-based projects as well as to raise the profile of music in prisons, as part of existing education and rehabilitation programmes. Over 75 projects later, the Trust has worked directly with hundreds of prisoners and has built up a beguiling archive of award winning publications, CDs, original music theatre scores and project evaluations that all underline the fact that talent is rife in prisons today. This artistic evolution can often only be unleashed as a result of professional artistic interventions that are able to surmount the hurdles of working in distinctly non-arts settings.

ITT visited HMP Askham Grange in December 1997 and August 1998 and ran two week-long performance workshops for more than 50 women. The success of these projects led to a suggestion of a return visit to undertake a long-term performance project. With guidance from the education department, a project was devised to be conducted over two months resulting in three performances.

(All in My Century 2002)

IDEAS

- to inspire and create music and writing with a group of women, some of whom have experience of projects of this kind and some who do not
- to devise and perform a musical
- to renew and develop working relationships with women who had taken part in previous projects

(Fair 2005)

- to give a group of prisoners the chance to work alongside professionals and each other, to produce a high quality arts performance

(Fair's Fair 2000)

- to produce a full-scale, professional production in an unusual setting.

(Julius Caesar 1999)

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TIME WELL SPENT



ACCESSIBILITY

The Artistic Director mentioned the importance of the mixed age/category group. It allowed a mixed group to work together and share a range of experiences.
(Fair 2005)

Project Objectives:

- to create a music and theatre production with a group of male inmates
- to work with a Shakespeare play that had an accessible theme and used direct language
- to inspire and create music theatre with people who have little or no theatrical, musical and technical experience
- to renew and further the musical and performance expertise of inmates already familiar with this type of work
- to give ongoing support and advice to those who wished to develop these experiences
- to develop an audience, in particular from the local community, and give the public the opportunity to witness the positive work that goes on in the prison system.

(Julius Caesar 1999)

SUITABILITY

What would be an ideal time commitment for such a course, bearing in mind artistic requirements, and how could these work around on-going prison visits, rehabilitation programmes, work and education work?

(Fair 2005)

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TIME WELL SPENT

Following agreement on structures and content, the Trust begins the process of sourcing funding opportunities. Regular meetings are held with prison staff to ensure all requirements are met and closer to the start date the participants are invited to a meeting with one of the Project Team to discuss their hopes, ambitions and desired outcomes for the project.



Key factors:

- Logistics
- Funding
- Practicalities
- Time

LOGISTICS

There is a need for a number of considerations to be factored into projects at the outset and for these to be discussed and agreed with prison staff and the Project Team. This includes allowing sufficient time between sending out recruitment information and the start of the project and suggests the following:

- recruitment publicity should clarify the need to commit to the project for the whole period
- participants will not be excluded because of other commitments, providing these are known about at the start to allow for artistic planning
- different levels of project commitment depending on these factors should be discussed pre-project with all concerned, so all the artistic team would know in advance and be able to plan and allocate roles accordingly. (Fair 2005)

Although the project was meant to be open to everyone, a variety of commitments with other prison courses made it impossible to be totally inclusive. It was suggested that discussion in the planning stage could have avoided excluding prospective participants and would, in the future, help the artistic team to plan together and thus include all those wishing to take part. The Head of Learning and Skills said that sadly this is a perennial problem with on-going educational and rehabilitation programmes. (Fair 2005)

FUNDING

In 1999, the Wates Foundation was beginning to question the funding of arts projects because of the lack of hard evidence emerging from such projects as to their value. The Wates Foundation believed that the arts had a role to play, and had been trying to fund research of this type for some time.

John Wates, the Chairman, wrote to the Irene Taylor Trust: "It is to do with an improvement in communication skills and an increase in confidence. This would hopefully enable the participants to be more likely to restore broken relationships, have a greater desire to look for meaningful employment and be able to obtain it and find a fulfilling lifestyle after prison that would mean that they did not have to resort to crime.... I suppose the key element is re-offending rates." (Julius Caesar 1999)



PRACTICALITIES

Any project involves a huge practical impact on the regime of the prison and makes demands on both the incoming artistic team and the prison staff. The 'devil is in the detail' is particularly pertinent when high-quality production values (and equipment) are being used and the Trust has been successful in acknowledging and negotiating all aspects of the impacts on the regime, whilst recognising that there will also always be perennial problems to address and overcome.



PRACTICALITIES

Equipment for the show arrived on two lorries and was assembled in the gymnasium. From this point on, the room had to be sealed from all prisoners. Security arrangements were met by sealing the sports hall from the rest of the gymnasium and using separate entrances. All of the tools and equipment were catalogued and accounted for at the end of each session and when the project finished. Prisoners were searched both through normal rub down searches and with hand-held metal detectors, throughout the project.

Staffing for the project was thoroughly planned: it was imperative that the staff involved knew the prisoners by sight, so one officer was detailed throughout the project, supplemented by others as required. The performances were scheduled as closely as possible around the staff shift patterns.

Practical organisation on a day-to-day basis was not difficult as important groundwork had been covered in meetings prior to the start. (Julius Caesar, 1999)

TIME

Many of the lessons learnt from previous projects were brought to bear on the Fair project, but ITT recognises that dealing with issues effectively and professionally in one prison context does not guarantee that they will not recur in another. Predicting and allocating adequate time to deal with a wide range of practical and logistical issues is a difficult task and not a precise science.

Examples from Julius Caesar, 1999:

- delays in shifting people around the prison had a significant impact on the contact time during the project
- miss-counts resulted in two lost afternoons on the project
- the arrangements for organising hundreds of tickets were very difficult in the absence of a Project Manager. Ideally, it needed somebody designated to liaise with a member of staff at the ITT office in order to keep up to date on additions and procedures
- everyone in the audience had to be on an appropriate list and security checked well before the show to allow the prison to have complete guest lists at the beginning of the final week
- afternoon visits were cancelled on the Saturday of the final performance. The men were not informed in time to make alternative arrangements to have morning visits.

The project leaders set aside two introductory days to give everyone an idea of the work that was going to be done.

(All in My Century 2000)



- One officer on C Wing designed theatrical symbols to put on the cell doors of all the men involved so that the officers unlocking them in the morning knew if they were needed for rehearsals. This made a huge difference to the attendance of men from this wing.

The prison was aware of what the team would be bringing in at the beginning and on a day-to-day basis - the gate staff helped to facilitate this.

(Julius Caesar 1999)



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TIME WELL SPENT

Crucial to the success of projects is the circulation of information and keeping people informed - springing any kind of 'surprise' on a prison is inadvisable. However, if you keep them up-to-date with information, the project will have a great chance of success.

Funders welcome the opportunity to see the work first hand and all are invited to see the work in progress or the final performance.



Key factors:

- Trust
- Respect
- Communication
- Invitation

The ITT Project Team sees the building of relationships as pivotal to the successful development and delivery of their project programmes in prisons. Perhaps starting with the prison Governor or the Education staff, the team also try to establish links with all the staff who will come into contact with the project and, most importantly, build in time to develop and establish the relationships with the participants, often through introductory or taster sessions. The key factors identified in this section are fairly obvious and fundamental ones, but are often hard won and highly valued by all those actively involved.

TRUST

HMP and YOI Bullwood Hall was cited as a suitable working partner because of the prison's high regard for the role of the arts. The inclusion of the arts in its ongoing educational programmes receives maximum support and encouragement from the regime. The Governor and staff also believe that access to independent organisations should be given wherever possible. ITT had previously run two successful projects at the prison, working in partnership with the education department, delivering music-making workshops, recording opportunities and innovative performances which included the inviting of families, friends and other inmates. (Fair 2005)

75% of staff changed their perception of arts projects to a positive view after seeing the performance. (All in My Century 2000)

RESPECT

"It was fantastic to work with the Irene Taylor Trust – they are so committed to getting the best from people. When I first said about doing a music project, a lot of the women closed themselves behind their computers and shied away saying, 'I can't do that!' For me, the way the Irene Taylor Trust worked with disaffected women and the way they became engaged in it and proud of their achievements – it's just incredible! The tour was brilliant – what amazing potential the piece has for schools – it's got a message, real pathos and entertaining at the same time." Carol Burke, Education Manager. (Fair's Fair 2000)



- Education staff were extremely supportive and helpful from day one to the end of the project, which (once again) made working very much easier.
- There was a 100% positive response from the prison staff on whether to have further arts projects of this kind in the establishment.



COMMUNICATION

- Staff (at the gate and on X-ray) were supremely helpful when it came to bringing a van-load of instruments into the prison. This process was made easier for the Trust as the staff were aware of what was happening (and why).
- The ITT team implemented the recommendations that had come from the evaluation of the Julius Caesar project at HMP Bullingdon and therefore contacted each Personal Officer involved and explained the purpose of the project and also the evaluation process.
(All in My Century 2000)

INVITATION

- The prison Governor invited ITT to return to the establishment to devise a music theatre project, which will involve a larger number of women.
- The staff and Governor of HMP Bullwood Hall welcome visitors to visit the prison and to attend performances, believing this allows prisoners and prison staff the chance to be seen in a more positive light.
- The Governor encouraged prison staff to attend performances as it was felt that this had a significant impact on staff/prisoner and prisoner/staff relationships. The Governor has since moved to Holloway prison, but the invitation to enhance a programme of artistic activity has been extended to ITT.
(Fair 2005)

In April a group of 39 women responded to an advert placed around the prison, informing them of a music theatre project. Two groups of women came together for a workshop designed jointly by the Irene Taylor Trust and the National Youth Theatre.
(Fair 2005)



- "I was very moved and thoroughly enjoyed the show - I would like to invite you to Strangeways to do a similar project." Officer Tonge, HMP Strangeways, member of the invited audience.
(Fair's Fair 2000)



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TIME WELL SPENT

Keeping the momentum and creativity going for long periods of time takes great skill and dedication from the project team. Professional delivery of a high-class activity encourages individuals to take the lead and encourages the respect and willingness to participate that is needed for a high quality outcome. ITT Project Team.



Key factors:

- Engagement
- Practice
- Achievement
- Rehearsal
- Performance
- Reflection

doing the projects

The Project Team's expertise in managing the stages of the journeys that everyone actively involved in the creative project will make is reflected in some of the key focus areas for evaluation. Engagement, practice and achievement are key stepping-stones along that journey, framed within professional production values and timescales, but also acknowledged as fraught with personal challenges and opportunities for individual 'rites of passage' and success.

ENGAGEMENT

The theme of Fair was based on stories developed over three weeks around issues of teenage pregnancies, drugs abuse, infidelity and imprisonment.

Excerpt from Radio 4 Woman's Hour broadcast – August 2004

"Using creative activities to introduce them to learning – it is about family ties and real life situations. We aim to increase confidence and skills that can be transferred to other things."
Project worker

PRACTICE

Excerpt from Radio 4 Woman's Hour broadcast – August 2004

" We walk back on the unit singing songs – it is very unusual to hear singing on the Life Unit. Being on the Life Unit, the project provided an unusual relief to prison life where self-esteem and self-confidence is generally very low. Some time ago I lost all my confidence and self-esteem and never imagined singing again and doing what I am doing now."
Adult participant

ACHIEVEMENT

Achievement comes at all stages of practice and rehearsal, getting its final acknowledgement through the performance and acclaim from peers, prison staff, audience and professionals.

- being able to sing in front of a big crowd
- learning not to strain the voice
- learning to project my voice
- learning to make eye contact with the audience
- working on something that is so professional
- the quality of it showed me that I have made progress.

(Fair's Fair 2000)

REHEARSAL

The rehearsals provide the professional structure to pull the strands of the project and the participants together, but can equally prove to be the most challenging time for both the project leaders and the individual participants.

"We learnt a lot, we improved our skills and got to work with new people...To take part in this means I can say I've worked with these people and this can be part of my work portfolio. This will be my third experience – and I loved it." Young offender (YO)

(Fair 2005)

We put the carnival music with the dance and at one point (for the first time) everyone was active... we then went over the rest of the songs with moderate success. The girls hate waiting around for reasonable things like setting up instruments and finding song words. They 'strop' off saying we are wasting their time and then more time is wasted as we try and coax them back.

Project Team diary (Fair 2005)



PERFORMANCE

A number of spell-binding performances of an original music theatre production, entitled *Fair*, in May 2004 were the result of only three weeks' conception, rehearsal and production with 20 inmates and ITT's project partners, the National Youth Theatre. (Fair 2005)

"The performance was important for me because I could show people that I'm still alive inside basically." A participant (Fairs' Fair 2000)

Prison staff views of the performances:

"I loved it - the performing arts are my passion and to see women I have come to know well who are struggling with such deep emotional issues coming to life and having fun was wonderful".

"A re-enforcement of the depth of talent untapped in the prison population".

The women then went on to tour the show to four women's prisons: HMPs New Hall, Durham, Low Newton and Styal. This represented an enormous achievement for the Irene Taylor Trust in terms of the organisation involved and the value to the participants of touring beyond the prison walls. For some women this entailed returning to an establishment in which they had served an earlier part of their sentence; they recorded the process of overcoming fear and negative memories and how performing transformed their view of themselves in that environment. (Fair's Fair 2000)

REFLECTION

"There was some days when everyone was really hot-headed but as time went by ... like yesterday, the performance was excellent and I got a buzz from it - I just sat in my cell thinking, I can't believe it... this has been one of the best experiences of my life and to have it happen in this place was amazing - totally." Young Offender (Fair 2005)



Participants' view of the positive elements of the project:

- performing
- team work
- the fact we wrote it together – ourselves
- improvisation
- confidence building
- working with different people
- learning to compromise
- working with the artistic team
- learning something new
- getting to the end

It is thrilling when a real 'talent' is uncovered but equally thrilling to see any kind of personal progress. Some participants arrive with obvious musical skills, others with boundless energy and enthusiasm. A few arrive wondering if they have made the right choice. Combining all these elements whilst listening, supporting and stretching individuals, as well as seeing a team come together with a real desire to succeed, has benefits that last way beyond the end of the project. ITT Project Team.



Key factors:

- Relating
- Supporting
- Change and Effects
- Journeys

with the participants

RELATING

The group consisted of adults, young offenders (YOs) and juvenile offenders and it was intended that, by using a co-educational approach with prisoners of mixed age and ability, they would take the piece and develop it thematically and musically. The project resulted in providing a mixed group of women with a positive and creative outlet for their musical, drama and dance abilities.

(Fair 2005)

The Artistic Director mentioned the importance of the mixed age/category group. It allowed a mixed group to work together and share a range of experiences. He also said how difficult it would have been to accept a new member into the group once the project was underway, i.e. by end of the first week when a group dynamic had been established.

(Fair 2005)

“Working with you and seeing how you get things out of people and how much you love what you do, gave me confidence to try stuff out. I knew I couldn’t fail and that was a good feeling - believe me!”

Participant (Fair 2005)

SUPPORTING

The rehearsals took place in the prison gym and classrooms, coming together in the last week for the rehearsals for three final performances.

Several people who contributed to the piece decided not to take part in the final show but asked other members of the company to perform their work. (The Fair Programme)

“Oh my gosh I have never been so scared. Going to court didn’t even give me the butterflies I had today - I couldn’t hear the music, only my heart beating in my ears. Thanks so much for pushing me, for being patient, for encouraging me and having faith. I now have confidence to have faith in myself too.”

Participant (Fair 2005)

CHANGE and EFFECTS

"This course is really making me more confident and be able to believe in me. People laugh at me whilst I'm doing anything and I don't care as I'm proud of myself for breaking out of my shell. Maybe I always had my own confidence deep down inside - I just forgot it was there."

Participant on DTO (Fair 2005)

Prison staff perceptions of the effects of an ITT project on participants

Staff recognised the value of such projects and identified these as being an opportunity to:

- build self-esteem
- show the women that they can achieve results
- explore alternative activities
- work as a team
- increase the morale of both staff and inmates
- give them something new to concentrate on
- express themselves clearly
- take their mind off the general regime
- be introduced to new kinds of music
- change their attitudes
- see the benefits of being a team member
- bring staff and inmates closer.

(Fair's Fair 2000)

with the participants



JOURNEYS

"I loved it - I mean I'm very outgoing 'n that and I thought the performance was proper good, yeah. And we got to meet people and Robert I think is excellent - I hope in the future I can be a Director like him cause he's cool you get me? Proper cool. I like the way he told everyone what to do 'n all that —it was proper." Young Offender (Fair 2005)

Excerpt from Radio 4 Woman's Hour broadcast – August 2004

" Many of the women and young girls at Bullwood Hall have suffered low self-esteem and many had had no previous opportunities to discover their skills. The women wrote and devised the play themselves." Adult participant, G Wing

Excerpts from the Project Team diary:

27th April

We had the opportunity to take the more difficult group into the music room to work on their song. We performed it and although they still have to get over their nerves and the constant laughing, things were definitely improving. They now say hello and goodbye to us and engage us in conversations.

One of the lifers said how nice it was to mix and work with the younger girls and the group was pleased and appreciative of her comment.

5th May

We still seem to have to contain them all the time to help the focus of the group and their level of unawareness of other people is quite astounding!(but) today there was certainly a whiff in the air of what it could be and how good it could be...

with the participants



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TIME WELL SPENT

It is fantastic and extremely valuable to have staff members taking an active part in the process. Not only do they know the prison and quite often the participants, but also encouraging positive relations between staff and prisoners in a creative environment is of great value in breaking down perceived barriers that may exist.



Key factors:

- Partnership
- Support
- Involvement
- Commitment

working with staff

PRISON GOVERNORS

Tony Hassall - Governor of Bullwood Hall – Fair 2004

"I want something that is going to complement the core curriculum that we do daily and can deliver very well ourselves. These complementary skills are what I call the 'soft skills' and include interpersonal skills like having an understanding of what it is like to be an active member of society and the confidence to help the women to develop on a personal level. For the young person, this is an opportunity to experiment and be safe in the learning environment and experience herself in a way that she might not have had a chance to try before. Exactly what a teenager's life is about - experimentation and finding an identity. We encourage that they go in and try to learn from the experience and hope that they might possibly come out of it a better person at the end."

Tony Hassall believes that participating in arts projects provides team-working skills, self-discipline, motivation, commitment and a range of practical skills. He strongly upholds the belief that arts interventions can change attitudes to re-offending by making prisoners more aware of their own abilities, offering participants a deeper insight into their creative skills, thereby allowing self-expression in a positive way. Additionally, he encourages creative projects as alternative routes to literacy, numeracy and opportunities to access education to provide work skills.

HEADS OF LEARNING AND SKILLS

Sue Saxton - Head of Learning and Skills at Bullwood Hall - Fair 2004

"The aim is to help the women to prepare for their return to the community through personal development, strengthening family ties, and acquisition of qualifications that will help them to get a job and to develop interests that will encourage the women to spend their leisure time constructively upon release."

The Education staff at Bullwood Hall believe that creative activities can contribute to all of those aims "and is not a soft option!". They reinforce those positive aspects to participating in the arts which assist in the development of concrete skills. These include:

- learning to work together
- problem solving
- decision making
- acquiring self-discipline
- commitment to tasks

VIEWS OF PRISON STAFF

HMP Askham Grange – Fair’s Fair 2000

There was a positive response to the project from all the staff involved in the evaluation. They recognised the value of such projects and identified these as being an opportunity to:

- build self-esteem
- show the women that they can achieve results
- explore alternative activities
- work as a team
- increase the morale of both staff and inmates
- give them something new to concentrate on
- express themselves clearly
- take their mind off the general regime
- be introduced to new kinds of music
- change their attitudes
- see the benefits of being a team member
- bring staff and inmates closer.

Prison personnel witnessed other changes in the participants, other than those recorded above. They noticed the women:

- being more tolerant of each other
- being more assertive
- talking more to other women not involved in the project
- feeling a little more in control of their lives
- being diverted from their own problems for a while.

The two officers who were detailed to the project showed a commitment over and above duty, coming in on days off and rearranging duties. One continued with the project even after he had officially retired from the prison.

HMP Bullingdon - Julius Caesar 1999

INVOLVEMENT AND COMMITMENT OF STAFF



- The completion of each performance evening was at 21.00 hours. The staff repeatedly had to extend their end of shift and the in-coming night staff had to deal with excited prisoners coming off stage.

Another prison that read about the project sent an officer to spend a day with one of the officers who had been involved in Julius Caesar to research ideas for a similar project.
HMP Bullingdon - Julius Caesar 1999



Never being afraid to ask questions, and trying to stay one step ahead of potential difficulties, contribute towards a successful project. Giving both staff and participants the support and encouragement needed to help deliver a smooth - running project and a positive personal experience validates why the project was conceived in the first place.

ITT Project Team

The range of challenges presented by the vulnerability of the participants, the logistics and practicalities of the production, and its impact on the prison regime and its staff are formidable. Acknowledging and understanding the key factors of these challenges are part of the Trust's approach to working with and working through them.

RESISTANCE

We can get no eye contact with some of them, which is fine because we know we'll get there. Others are up for asking questions all the time. Constant extremes!

"I can't do it and I won't do it 'cos it's shit." Participant (Fair 2005)

" I would just like to say that this has been the most boring morning of my life" – Participant who then went back to reading her copy of 'Heat'. (Fair 2005)

Excerpt from the Project Team diary (Fair 2005)

OBSTACLES

The final week proved to be extremely difficult as, due to lockdowns, the artistic team were only able to work for five out of the twelve planned hours. The dress rehearsal was cancelled and, in effect, the first performance was the first time the whole piece had been run through.

(All in My Century 2000)

Key factors:

- Resistance
- Obstacles
- Failures
- Commitment



- Excerpt from the Project Team diary (Fair 2005)
It's hard to work in prisons anyway but this group, the difference in ages, the courses, the apathy, their anger, and their low concentration threshold - all very difficult.



FAILURES

Due to the general apathy of the previous day, Robert decided to state why we were there and what would be expected from participants during the project. The response was that a couple of the girls decided to leave the group.

Due to insufficient lead-in time, general planning and finalisation of the group beforehand it has become very difficult to conduct the research in the way they wanted. The project team can't afford to give them time as so much has been lost already.

Excerpts from Project Team diary (Fair 2005)

COMMITMENT

It's been so much about interpersonal relationships this week and not really about the task in hand but very slowly they are starting to settle. Well some of them are!

The afternoon saw probably the fewest people so far what with courses and visits etc. It was virtually impossible for Robert as people were missing from scenes, only so much could be done. However we were able to fix and rehearse several of the songs so it wasn't wasted.

Excerpt from Project Team diary (Fair 2005)



19 out of the 21 women who started the project, stayed for the duration. (Fair 2005)

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TIME WELL SPENT

By monitoring each project as well as undertaking larger scale evaluations, the Trust is able to build upon successes and learn about potential new benefits and opportunities for prisons and participants. ITT Project Team



Key factors:

- What worked
- What didn't work
- Questioning
- Listening

The focus on learning from the different aspects of the projects is integral to the rigour and development of the Trust's programmes of projects in prisons.

WHAT WORKED

Artists noticed how many of the older women had acted as mother figures for younger members. Although there were demonstrations of frustration at times, this simply increased the need for them to take on a motherly role and encourage the younger participants to persist, even when morale flagged.

(Fair 2005)

Observation and comments from the Focus Group

- the women were accustomed to us and keen to share their thoughts and feelings post-project
- they appeared more confident and were proud of their achievements and were keen to discuss them – keeping the project 'alive' for longer
- it was observed by staff in the Education department that all inmates left the focus groups happier than when they arrived
- all the participants were aware that, for them, the research would possibly enable further projects through positive publicity leading to funding opportunities in the future
- it gave the women the opportunity to discuss ways in which the project could lead to further musical opportunities, either on release or during their stay in other establishments
- it gave the women the opportunity to discuss further accreditation and learn more about similar projects in women's prisons and the possibility of extending performing opportunities of Fair 'live' at a festival
- all participants were issued with the Irene Taylor Trust Certificates for their portfolios, with copies for their families - which opened up new discussions on the importance of music projects and how they could build on what they had learned
- many of the women presented their diaries which also provided evidence for accreditation from the Education department.

WHAT DIDN'T WORK

Fair has thrown up a number of unexpected outcomes and new avenues to explore, and yet, 10 months post-project, ITT are still waiting for the much-needed prison statistics and prison information believed so vital to the research. These challenges demonstrate that new models of research are needed which can be effective without an over-reliance on (individual) prison statistics.

(Fair 2005)

QUESTIONING

The following ideas were discussed with the Head of Learning and Skills, which can help to inform future projects:

- smaller groups of approximately 15 people
 - 2 lead-in days to ensure commitment and discussion
 - shorter project
 - mornings only to allow for visits, work, therapy etc
 - longer overall time – i.e. 3 days a week over 5 weeks
 - staffing issues - the possibility of an allocation of a core of staff throughout the project.
- (Fair 2005)

LISTENING

The project was based on a musical theatre production originally developed by women at HMP Askham Grange in 2000 entitled 'Fair's Fair'. However, it soon became clear that the original production was not going to be reprised, as the participants were adamant that they told their own story within the given theme.

(Fair 2005)



- Excerpt from Project Team diary (Fair 2005)

The difference this morning was that those who didn't want to do it allowed space for the others to carry on without crashing in and complaining. It seems as though they are slowly seeing that they are part of a process that is happening and are quietly enjoying it.



The Trust constantly strives to ensure the projects it delivers are of the highest artistic standards and achieve the greatest possible success. In order to monitor this, the Trust has implemented an evaluation strategy that includes recording opinions of participants, prison staff, project workers and audiences. The Trust endeavours to track future progress of participants through building positive relationships with each individual. This kind of information is invaluable to prisons, funders and other arts organisations. ITT Project Team.



Key factors:

- Research
- Evaluation
- Criteria
- Hard evidence
- Collaboration

RESEARCH

Previous evaluations have focused on the range of reasons for participating and also the psychological, artistic and social outcomes for participants, the project team and the prison regime. ITT is now building research models with their existing and new-found partners: models which are primarily relevant to measuring the positive aspects of arts interventions across a range of key criteria.

EVALUATION

The evaluative approach employed by the researchers was based on both direct observations and reflective interviews. The five key areas of focus for the evaluation were:

- practice
 - engagement
 - achievement
 - change
 - short- and long-term value.
- (Fair 2005)

CRITERIA

The criteria for measuring the positive aspects of arts intervention were:

- previous artistic experience
- expectations
- ability to communicate
- increased confidence and self-esteem
- education targets
- language
- future aspirations.

HARD EVIDENCE

ITT acknowledges that both longitudinal and quantitative evidence is difficult to obtain on the impact of arts interventions. Tracking participants over a 10 month and again at an 18 month post-project period have been built into the structure of the Fair project and its evaluation.

(Fair 2005)

Alongside the social impact of the project, it was also anticipated that the project would help to meet key educational targets and educational accreditation, and would help to address communication skills, group and team work, decision making, problem solving, and key skills in writing (via diaries). Other areas in which it was hoped it would add to the existing education and accreditation of inmates was through theatre management, food technology, costume design, hairdressing and make-up, all of which currently exist as accredited subjects within the prison.

(Fair 2005)

COLLABORATION

Two young offenders (YOs) spoke openly about the sensitive issue of self-harming (Code 20:52) and felt that their confidence and self-esteem had increased as a result of taking part and that had impacted on their ability to stop self-harming. The long-term nature of this report will help to determine if this effect is significant and sustainable.

The researchers are currently pursuing this avenue of research in conjunction with the Head of Learning and Skills, to evaluate:

- prison statistics regarding self-harm within the prison and amongst women offenders in other jails
- numbers of 20:52s during the project period versus the percentage of self-harmers in prison overall
- cost multiplier – assessment of any positive financial reverberations with regards to staffing and healthcare costs.

(Fair 2005)



Working out 'where things can go from here' is vital for the ongoing development of an organisation and the artistic life of a prison. A successful well-executed, well-documented project with relevant hard and soft outcomes will maximise the chance of ongoing funding, development of working partnerships (with prisons and other arts organisations) and most importantly, the chance for participants to engage in ongoing creative work. ITT Project Team



Key factors:

- Partnerships
- Continuity
- New opportunities
- Working with CJS agendas

on sustainability

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership working is a key element of successful arts projects within the criminal justice arena. The Music Theatre intervention took place two years after the Youth Justice Board (YJB) conference and demonstrates successful partnerships on a number of different levels. Whilst firmly up-holding the principals of the YJB it was able to further develop the principles of successful partnership by promoting the benefits of mixed categories of offenders in one project – from DTO's, Young Offenders and adult prisoners. This added a new dimension to the research. (Fair 2005)

CONTINUITY

A post-project follow up was conducted after 10 months in March 2005:

- 16 participants remain in Bullwood Hall
- 10 responded to the last mail out in December 2004, of whom
- 3 participants had been transferred to other prisons to serve the second part of their Life Sentence
- 1 has since been released and has visited the ITT offices in Brixton.

(Fair 2005)

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Meeting the Home Secretary:

As a direct result of completing the 'Fair' project, the youngest participant in 'Fair,' a juvenile participant on a Detention and Training Order (DTO) during the project period, was invited to attend the Annual Youth Justice Board Conference in London in November 2004. One week prior to the conference, she was escorted from Bullwood Hall for a pre-conference meeting with Home Secretary Rt. Hon David Blunkett MP. Together with 4 other young people on ASBOs, she was consulted about young people's responses to crime and detention and to assess What Works?

(Fair 2005)

WORKING WITH CJS AGENDAS

“To survive outside, ex-prisoners need to have well-developed life skills. Indeed, given the prejudice and barriers they will face they arguably need to have better life skills than the rest of the population. Yet too often time in prison reinforces institutionalisation rather than promoting positive life skills.”

‘Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners’ Social Exclusion Unit July, 2002

The Trust believes that one of the key issues for arts in criminal justice work is to provide demonstrable results in terms of prevention and re-offending.

It is the aim of the Trust that:

- prisoners are offered meaningful routes into learning
- offending behaviour is challenged
- participants leave prison with a new set of skills and positive experiences
- participants can develop a sense of pride in being involved in meaningful activities
- the projects serve as an outlet for creativity and positive personal development
- the skills and experiences developed through participation assist in lessening re-offending upon release and the route to meaningful lifestyles.

(Fair 2005)



All adult prisoners at HMP Bullwood Hall are serving the first third of a life sentence.

The Irene Taylor Trust (Music in Prisons) – Additional information

The Trust benefits from having an exceptional team of professional musicians who are highly experienced in working with offenders. All of the projects empower the participants by allowing them to create and perform the music themselves. During a project, the group, which will normally consist of around 15 participants, will work towards a performance for other inmates, prison staff and friends and family. The new music is also recorded and professionally mixed, and copies of the CD are sent to the participants and to their families. Both the performance and the creation of the CD are extremely important in creating a sense of achievement..

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Resources - 'Music Out' Handbook



Organised regionally, the handbook contains useful contacts for music and cross-arts projects across the country.

Photographs in this publication

Photos taken by project worker Lizzie Coombes and Janine and Ruth from HMPYOI Holloway during a creative music and photography project marking the 10th anniversary of the Irene Taylor Trust in June 2005.

Website

www.musicinprisons.org.uk



Songbooks



Beyond the Secret Door

A CD and songbook for parents and children written by women at HMPs Askham Grange, Low Newton and Durham

Each prison really wanted to be involved in something that provided a creative focus for the women in their care and which would benefit so many other people both in prison and outside. (Introduction to the songbook)



I see you, I see me

A CD and songbook written by fathers for their children.

The Trust's partners in the project, HMYOI Swinfen Hall and HMPs Wormwood Scrubs and Brixton, were all keen that the project should consolidate and supplement valuable work for fathers and their children already being undertaken in each establishment.

(Introduction to the songbook)





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