WHY WE SHOULD MEASURE, WHAT WE SHOULD MEASURE

by ANNALISA CICERCHIA *

«When you can measure what you are spea-king about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind»

Lord W. T. Kelvin, 1883 The Answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe and Everything is 42, Douglas Adams, 1979)

1. No monsters, a few dead ends

«Evaluating the social impact of participating in the arts has long been a sort of *terra incognita*, a continent whose existence is known, but which remains unexplored. Travellers' tales, where they existed, were full of mystery and menace, implying a land filled with dangers for the unwary. The sketchiness of the information encouraged some to argue that El Dorado lay there, while others asserted it was a desert, a wasteland best avoided. Our research has sought to throw some light on this shadowy region by establishing a base for further exploration. We have cleared some ground and begun to open up routes to the interior, some of which may prove to be dead ends. If the flora and fauna are unfamiliar, we have at least encountered no monsters». (Matarasso, 1997). As outcome of his pioneering research presented in the report *Use or Ornament*, Matarasso, interested in assessing and documenting the role of the arts in societal development and cohesion, listed 50 social impacts of participation in the arts:

- 1 Increase people's confidence and sense of self-worth
- 2 Extend involvement in social activity
- 3 Give people influence over how they are seen by others
- 4 Stimulate interest and confidence in the arts
- 5 Provide a forum to explore personal rights and responsibilities
- 6 Contribute to the educational development of children
- 7 Encourage adults to take up education and training opportunities
- 8 Help build new skills and work experience
- 9 Contribute to people's employability

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