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A GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF THE
WELLBEING EFFECTS OF CIRCUS

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THE BACKGROUND OF STUDYING EFFECTS

Circus has many benefits. It is very likely that everyone who has either given circus lessons or been employed in the field of social circus is ready to agree with this simple statement. The participants will notice the wellbeing effects in a succession of moments: the way their mood is raised, the way they focus in practice, the way they will burst out in spontaneous laughter, in the way they can give their all, finally culminating in them becoming confident performers. However, when it is time to find new funding for the activity, the circus organisations are always struggling with the same problem: how can all these benefits and enjoyment be presented convincingly to the potential purchasers?

The Effective Circus project (2011–2014) started looking for the solution with the help of six participant circuses and one company that specialises in researching wellbeing services. The project organised circus teaching in five collaborating municipalities and the circuses' wellbeing services were marketed in Lapland. The study of the effects of circus activity was conducted using different methods and target audiences. Sorin Sirkus in Tampere, SirkusUnioni in Turku, Sirkus Magenta in Vantaa, Oulun Tähtisirkus in Oulu, Cultural Centre Pii Poo in Lempäälä and Monitaidyhdistys Piste in the Lapland region have been valuable collaborators in the development of the activity which has resulted in the publication *They're Smiling from Ear to Ear – Wellbeing Effects of Social Circus*.

Studying the effects of circus activity, or any other cultural activity, does not have to be as intimidating as it may seem for many people. All that needs to be done is to plan the research well and carry it out systematically, which can be done by anyone. This booklet is a good place to start researching the effects of your activity.

At the end of this guide you will find another approach to the study of effects in an article written by an specialist.

We hope that these pages inspire our readers to study the benefits of social circus!

The Effective Circus project management

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A GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF THE WELLBEING EFFECTS OF CIRCUS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social circus is generally considered as pleasant and rewarding. The eyes focus, the body finds its balance, and the hands juggle colourful balls. You can feel your legs flex, you get warm, and suddenly you are hoisting someone up to form a pyramid. The circus course finishes with a performance where your families and friends get to admire your best trampoline jumps and see you spinning the diabolo. The circus creates experiences: I did it, I can do it! How can you describe this feeling in a way that people who were not there will understand?

This guide offers the actors in the social circus field the keys to the study and validation of the effects of the circus on wellbeing. The guide also explains how to collect information on these effects by using surveys and interviews, and for processing the information and compiling an information package without major investments in research. Any circus performer can easily collect at least a minimal amount of feedback. Trained researchers can be asked for assistance when necessary.

The purpose of studying the impact of circus is to collect information in order to develop circus activity and to explain the significance of circus to its organisers and purchasers, for example the municipal sector. Impact study hopes to find answers to the following questions: How does social circus promote wellbeing? Why should social circus be organised?

In social circus everyone gets to practice and perform tricks and stunts. The attention is directed towards controlling the body and the equipment, on balance and movement. The atmosphere in the circus is encouraging and mistakes are expected. Participation in group activities with others creates community spirit and gives participants the confidence to perform. Social circus has many wellbeing effects, and it is important to make them visible.

This guide for conducting research on a social circus can be modified to collect impact data also on other services.

2. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Why do we need knowledge of the effects?

The purpose of the study is to gather reliable information about the effects of the activity on the wellbeing of its participants. This information is needed in the evaluation and development of the circus activity from the perspective of various target groups. It is also important to explain to financiers and purchasers why this activity is worth the investment, how their clients will benefit, and what goals will be reached with the help of this activity.

The objective is to describe the immediate and short-term effects of the activities on the participants. At the same time, the study gives an overview of the positive impact the activities have on the participants' lives and their operational environment when practiced over the long term. However, the purpose is not to scientifically prove these long-term effects on the wellbeing of the clients, because the quality of the clients' lives is the result of many other factors as well. The validation of the effects would require a considerable amount of scientific research under controlled conditions. Sometimes there just are not enough resources. However, information, signals and impressions can be gathered using lighter research methods which, taken together, will showcase the significance of the activity with sufficient reliability.

The planning of the study can be started by defining the kind of knowledge the research is intended to collect and showcase. The aims of the study have to be considered from several perspectives. Furthermore, it is useful to consider whether the circus activities have any special characteristics which set them apart from other activities. The contents of the impact study can be outlined by answering the following questions:

- What objectives of the purchasers and financiers can the activity meet?
- What are the effects the purchaser and financier are willing to pay for?
- Why is this particular kind of activity worth the investment?
- What kind of added value does circus activity create in comparison with other kinds of cultural and physical activities?
- What goals and needs of the target group will circus meet?

What kinds of effects can be studied?

The effects of social circus activities can be analysed in terms of:

- Their wellbeing effects on the clients.
- The effects on the wellbeing at workplaces.
- Economic effects.
- The effects on the structure of services.

The central purpose of the activity is to improve the wellbeing of certain target groups and of the society. It is equally important to improve the wellbeing of the employees who implement the services: how does the activity support and develop the work done, for example, in schools, retirement homes and nursing homes for people with physical and mental disabilities. The activity should always be financially feasible: it can create real financial savings. This relates to the economic effects of the activity. When brought into the service sector, the activity will have an impact on the structures of services. In the long term, the counteractive work in art and culture activities can diminish the need for the heavier institutional health care services.

This method guide examines how the wellbeing effects on the circus participants can be researched. Wellbeing is a signifier of operational ability: a person with a high level of wellbeing is capable of self-expression. Social circus activity generally has many different objectives concerning the clients' wellbeing. These can include improvements to the participants' self-image, self-esteem and confidence, the development of social interaction and community spirit and increased joy of living. These objectives emerge when planning circus activities for children, young people, families, and the elderly.

Circus activity also supports interaction and co-operation between the participants and the personnel, as for example when the nursing staff in a healthcare facility shares in the activities with their patients, or when teachers participate alongside their students. This is why the impact study will inevitably reveal the viewpoint of the school personnel and nursing staff on the activity. Additionally, the results of an impact study may give reference to the financial and structural effects of the circus activity, however, these are beyond the scope of this study.

3. THE STAGES OF EXECUTING THE STUDY

The study of effectiveness should begin with the creation of a structural model of the content and with the selection of the kind of information that is needed and for whom. The study takes place in the following stages.

| | |
|---|---|
| I Determining the purpose of the research | The necessary information: What kind of information is needed? For what purpose? For whom? |
| II Formulating the research themes | <p>Target group: What is the target group of social circus? What are the special characteristics of this group?</p> <p>The themes: What are the psychological, social and physical effects that need to be examined? What kinds of objectives does circus have for the target group? What kinds of effects have been detected in circus and what effects are to be expected? Does circus have an effect on people outside of the target group, such as members of the family or the staff at the care unit?</p> <p>Other research themes: What kind of assessment knowledge is needed concerning the manner in which the circus activity is carried out? What kinds of individual and environmental background factors should be taken into account?</p> |
| III Preparation for the study | <p>Research permits: It is important to obtain any necessary authorization for research well in advance. Who will complete the survey: the target group, other circus participants (such as nurses, teachers), family members, circus instructors?</p> <p>Interviews: Who will take part in the interviews? Are the interviews carried out individually or as focus groups?</p> <p>Previous research: What research is already available on the effects of physical exercise and culture on the target group?</p> <p>Setting the research questions: Formulating the questions for the interviews and the surveys based on the research themes.</p> |



| | |
|---|---|
| IV Collecting the information | <p>The practices of collecting the information and agreeing on the research methods: Contact the participants to arrange the administration of the surveys and to schedule the interviews.</p> |
| V Analysing and reporting the information | <p>Analysing, reporting and utilising the information collected from the questionnaires and the interviews.</p> |

All the stages of the study are reviewed in chapter 4. Chapter 5 will explain how to conduct the study. Appendices at the end of the guide contain the questionnaires, samples of interview forms, directions for processing the survey data and research permit applications which the circuses can modify as needed. *“They’re Smiling from Ear to Ear” – Wellbeing Effects from Social Circus* presents the results of a research study on the effects of social circus, which were obtained by following the methods presented in this guide.



SUSANNA LYIV, LASTEN JA NUORTEN KULTTUURIKESKUS PIIPOO

4. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

4.1. Determining the themes of the wellbeing effects

In the planning stages of studying the effects of circus activity, the concept of wellbeing must be defined, so that the various wellbeing effects may be given sufficient attention and that they can be comprehensively presented.

Human wellbeing has psychological, social, physical and functional components.

- Psychological wellbeing and functioning consist of, for example, mood, emotions, coping with challenges, self-esteem, cognitive processes, learning and concentration.
- Social wellbeing and functioning are formed through community spirit, group participation and by being appreciated. The level of social functioning is manifested in how effortlessly the client engages in social interaction.
- Physical wellbeing and functioning are built on the motor skills, mobility and physical strength. Physical functioning is the way in which a client manages his or her activities of daily living, chores and the ability to spend leisure time in a meaningful way.

According to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), functional health and ability are based on the individual's health, body functions, performance and physical ability to participate. Numerous environmental factors promote and restrict functional ability, and individual factors affect the person's environment of functioning.¹

- The factors to consider in a person's health condition are his or her needs for special support, illnesses, physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities and mental health problems.
- As far as the personal factors, the clients can be grouped according to their gender and situation in life: babies, children, young people, people in working age, and the elderly.
- The environmental factors include the risk of social exclusion, multicultural background, child welfare issues and the physical operational environment.
- A person's level of physical and psychological functioning and their limitations affect his or her performance in various tasks; this shows in different situations in life, such as participating in group activities and meeting friends.

¹ <http://www.sosiaaliportti.fi/fi-FI/vammaispalvelujen-kasikirja/tyovalineitat/arviointimenetelmia/toimintakyvyn-arviointi/>

Determining the themes of the impact study according to the circus's target groups

This framework should be used when structuring the research themes and formulating the study questions; it is useful to consider and discuss the various effects the circus activity might have on the target group already at the planning stages. The effects of the social circus are psychological, physical and social (table 1). When the research is carried out in a school, a health care facility or other service unit, it can include the staff.

Table 1. An example of themes and study questions.

Psychological effects

- Mood during and after the practice
- Elevation of confidence and self-esteem
- Memorable experiences from practice sessions
- Commitment to practice
- Increased independence
- The development of language skills

Physical effects

- Improvement in physical fitness
- Development of mobility
- Learning new skills and stunts
- The client's treatment becoming easier

Social effects

- Interaction, social skills
- Working with a partner, working in groups
- Parent-child-relationship
- Confidence to participate
- Self-expression
- Feeling of belonging
- The group's ability to concentrate on practicing
- The decrease in social problems

The effects on the staff

- Improved working atmosphere
- The client's treatment becoming easier
- Increased energy
- Better contact with the clients

The functionality of the circus instruction

- The group's possibility to give input to the contents of the circus lesson
- The sufficiency of personal instruction
- The clarity of the instructor's directions.
- The suitable level of difficulty on the practice sessions
- The instructor's contact with the participants

The respondents' background information

- Gender, age
- Name of the circus group

When studying the effects of social circus, it is necessary to be mindful of the target group's special characteristics, needs and objectives. The participants' age, gender and the composition of the group are also important. In this example the potential participants in the social circus are divided into groups according to their life situation, state of health and environmental factors:

- Families with babies, families with small children, families falling within child welfare services.
- Day-care groups, primary and lower secondary level flexible basic education classes and small group teaching, young people in suburbs.
- Children and young people with intellectual disabilities, young people with Asperger's syndrome, the visually impaired and mental health rehabilitants.
- Institutionalised children, young people and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and the elderly.

When the aim is to present the criteria for the quality of circus activity, it is useful to examine how the activity is organised and how the clients experience it. This way, the study can produce important information on the components that create high-quality circus activities and showcase how well the criteria are met.

To define the relevant themes and research questions, it is a good idea to consult the circus instructors to assemble their views and experiences on the impact of the circus activity. Valuable insights into the content of the study can also be obtained from the experts in the field who are familiar with the circus's target groups and have observed its effects in other areas of life. In addition, the clients can be interviewed in order to elicit ideas about the survey questions. In this way, the researchers can test and strengthen the accuracy of these initial hypotheses.

4.2. Research permissions

Each municipality and institution has its own rules about granting permission to outside researchers. The representative of the target group, such as the head master in a school or the director of a health care facility, must always be fully informed about the study. It is necessary to ask the director of the institution about its policies about allowing research and obtain permission when required. All communication needs to include the information about the way the study will be conducted and the assurance that no personal information will be collected.

When the research involves subjects under 18 years of age, researchers are required to obtain written consent from the children's parents. The form in appendix 5 can be used for this purpose.

In schools, the headmaster must grant permission for research. If the school has its own research permit form, it should be used. Otherwise use the blank form in the appendix 5

In some areas, permission for research permit must be given by the municipality. In this case it is best to turn to the person responsible for the research permits, for example the director of education or social services. Appendix 5 includes a sample research permission form which is used in the Finnish municipality of Oulu.

It is not necessary to apply for the research permit if the feedback is collected without breaching the participants' physical or psychological impunity, and the research does not require the compilation of a customer registry.

To be taken into consideration:

- Receiving the required research permits might take a few months, so the process should be started well in advance.
- Any personally identifiable information may not be processed in the study. Even the interview notes may not include a person's names or any other information which may enable the identification of the respondent.
- If an account given by a child is used to create a singular case story, it must be ensured that he can not be recognised from the story. If a person's name will be included, a written permission must be obtained from both the child and his parents.
- If the material will be archived to be used in further study, permission must be obtained. The material must be stored in a way that guarantees no access by outsiders. Otherwise the material has to be destroyed upon completion of the study.
- Even if there were no plans for continued use of the material, it would be a good idea to keep in mind the possibility of further study.
- More information on the subject can be found from The Finnish Social Science Data Archive for example.¹

¹ <http://www.fsd.uta.fi/tiedonhallinta/osa3.html/>



KARI VAINIO, SIRKUSUNIONI

4.3. Methods for collecting data

It is possible to evaluate the effects of the circus activity on the wellbeing of its participants from many angles. It is of particular importance to bring out the participant's own experiences. The evaluation may also include opinions by the participant's family and friends, nursing staff, teachers, instructors and others who interact on a daily basis with the participant and might have also taken part in the circus lessons. These people can evaluate the effects circus has on the participant's wellbeing, in performing activities of daily living and his or her social interactions. They may see some effects that the participant does not notice himself or is unable to express. The circus instructor can also evaluate circus's impact on a group or a participant as he is in position to observe the individual development of participants.

The data acquisition methods may include surveys and interviews, which are easy to conduct in practice. All the researcher needs to do is give the respondents a number of questions formulated in a clear and understandable way and a peaceful moment to answer them. Interviews can also be conducted as focus groups in a circus group or, for example, among the nursing staff who participated in the circus activity.

The questionnaire forms can be devised to include measures which yield quantitative data on the experiences from and effects of circus activities. Surveys and interviews can generate qualitative, verbal information. Quantitative and qualitative information complement one another well and they are both valuable.

The following other research methods can also be used:

- Experts should be consulted whenever possible. A physical therapist, for example, who is familiar with the group's initial condition and its development during the circus activity, might describe changes that he or she has noticed. Such an expert might observe and evaluate the circus course at the beginning, the midpoint, and the end of the project. The group's teacher, or a nurse, who participated in the circus also counts as an expert.
- Video footage of the group's activity at the beginning and end of the course can speak volumes, especially when clients cannot express themselves verbally. It might be a good practice to gather footage of the circus groups and use it to create a video insert, a few minutes in length, to present at marketing events as well as at a final meeting with the purchaser. The video footage can be used to edit clips which demonstrate the significance and effects of circus activity. (It is important to ask for the participants' permission!)
- Sorin Sirkus has developed a Mood-O-Meter which the circus participants use to evaluate their mood and energy level at the beginning and end of each circus lesson. The Mood-O-Meter consists of two forms (appendix 1) which can be used either separately or side by side. When the participants have been very lively and energetic to begin with, the researchers have used only the measure that indicates the participants' mood. Both measures are useful, for example, when used with young people and adults who are in recovery from substance abuse or who have a mental disability. The measures have been applied only with groups where it has seemed useful. The first results from the use of the "Meter" will be compiled by the end of 2013. So far the preliminary results have been positive.

Administering the surveys

Appendix 2 contains several templates for the survey questionnaires that are suitable for various target and respondent groups. The templates can be used as such or modified when necessary.

The forms are mainly one-time surveys where the intention is to implement only one survey at the end of the circus course. However, the initial and final survey forms are meant to be used at the beginning and the end of a circus course so that one respondent group completes two questionnaires. In long-term circus courses the initial and final surveys can be implemented, for example, at the beginning and end of each semester. The results from the final survey can thus be compared with those of the initial survey: what were the objectives of the circus activity, did the participants need special support, and how well did circus meet the needs of the participants. Ideally, most of the people who complete the initial survey also complete the final one, because it makes it possible to make personal evaluations. It is advisable to use a pseudonym instead of the respondents' real names in the initial and final surveys to ensure that the clients are not recognisable from the material.

Some of the questionnaires are meant to be filled out by the clients who participate in the circus themselves (the forms for children and young people) or by the family who participate together (baby circus and family forms). There are separate forms for parents, teachers, nurses and the family members of the elderly participants (form for the elderly). The surveys can be implemented at the same time with different kinds of respondents, encompassing for example both the children and their teacher to widen the scope of received data. The difficulty level of the form has to correspond to the level of the different respondent groups, and it should contain only such questions that can be answered by the participants themselves. A child and a caregiver can also complete the form together.

A group instructor, a teacher, or a circus instructor can complete the questionnaire for one or more participants. A separate form is filled out for each of the participants, which allows the researcher to consider the client's background information when the survey is processed, and gives the researcher the possibility to get a personalized view on the effects of circus. In other words, one form should only contain the answers given by one individual respondent. It may be challenging for the staff to find the time to fill out separate forms for several participants, but it is reasonable to expect them to fill out of at least one or two questionnaire forms. Alternatively, the staff may be interviewed so that they might evaluate the group's development in its entirety. These practices are always agreed upon with the purchaser's head of staff.

Perhaps the easiest way to collect data by using survey questionnaires is to take 15 minutes at the end of the circus lesson to fill out the forms. This way the circus instructor may assist in answering the questions by clarifying their meaning. It is preferable to keep the questionnaire quite



short and clear asking only the essential questions. The questionnaire forms in the appendices can be shortened when necessary.

The questionnaires can also be given to the respondents to fill out at home, to be returned in the next circus lesson. However, this may cause a delay if some respondents forget to bring back the form. There may also be group-specific differences in getting back the filled out forms: for example, school teachers can ensure that their students promptly return their questionnaires to the circus instructor.

The surveys should be conducted anonymously. The respondents can seal their completed questionnaires in an envelope or fold it and staple it shut. The circus instructor should not read the completed questionnaires in the presence of the respondents.

The respondents are informed about the method of analysing and presenting the results of the survey: the results will be reported group by group, and answers will not be traceable to any respondent. Case stories can be extracted from the research data, but the respondent's name must be changed, and any possible personal identification information has to be removed. It is also possible to create fictionalized case stories by combining personal stories of several respondents.

It is possible to use online surveys, so that the clients can fill out their forms at home using their computers. The questionnaire can be distributed via email or on the circus's web pages as a direct link to the questionnaire. There are several survey software programs available which require the purchasing of a license, or paid rights of access, that process the results in various different ways. Alternatively, it is possible to use free online survey software programs, for example Google Drive, that produce a smaller amount of completed results. The data from the survey programs can then be transferred to spreadsheets. The directions on how to use Google Drive can be found on its web site.

To encourage participation in the survey, and to thank people for their participation, a raffle for a prize draw can be offered. The prize may be, for example, a ticket to a circus. However, simply showing interest in the participants' experiences can be motivational in itself, as is opportunity for them to have an impact on the circus activity by offering their feedback. Again, the participants should understand that the purpose of the survey is to collect information about the circus and not of the participants themselves.

It may be difficult to obtain an assent form signed by the parents if the teenagers forget to return them. In this case the survey may be carried out in conjunction with Christmas or spring performances so that the parents will be present and able to sign the permissions. The parents' verbal permissions can also be collected by phone.

The structure of the survey questionnaires

- The survey forms found in the appendices feature multiple-choice questions with ready-made alternative answers, and open-ended questions to which the respondent can write his own answers. The multiple-choice questions given as examples are formulated as statements. It is useful to consider the type of questions suitable for each respondent group and to pay attention to the sufficient simplicity of language. Small children can express their satisfaction with smiley faces whereas grown-ups are more willing to write about their experiences.

Using statements in multiple-choice questions

- The questionnaire templates (appendix 2) include statements that the client answers by choosing between five alternatives on the scale of “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree.”

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Circus is exciting | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus makes me happy | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I have learned to concentrate during circus practice | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Here is an example of a question:

- The questions can contain statements about the main characteristics of the circus activity. However, the statements can also be modified to reflect the objectives of the activity.
- The statements are given numerical values so that the most positive alternative is given the value 5 and the most negative alternative value 1. These values can be used in analysing the answers, for example, when calculating the mean value of the answers.
- All the statements in the same series of questions should be only positive – or only negative – because it is clearer for the respondent and makes the questions easier to answer.
- The statements should be unambiguous and touch upon only one issue at a time. Instead of making statements such as circus is inspiring and develops different skills, there should be two separate statements: circus is inspiring and circus has taught me new skills.

- The multiple-choice statements tend to be leading so there should be a combination of positive, neutral, and negative statements. Negative statements may reveal that there is something in the circus that the participants dislike and might want to change.
- The following is an example of a more neutral way to formulate the questions:

| | Very good | Good | Neither good nor bad | Bad | Very bad |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------|----------------------|-----|----------|
| The atmosphere at the circus | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Mood after circus | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus's effect on concentration | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

MIA BERGIUS, SORIN SIRKUS



Open-ended questions

- Open-ended questions are generally very useful in drawing out the central effects and peak experiences of the circus activity. The open-ended questions elicit narrative accounts from the clients. However, the answers often tend to be quite brief and superficial. Especially children and young people tend to write very short answers. Nonetheless, the open-ended questions provide important complementary data to the multiple-choice questions. At best, the respondents can write lengthy, deeply emotional testimonials about the circus. These descriptions can be more informative than the answers to the multiple-choice questions since they are a respondent's own words.
- It is practical to formulate the questions so that the respondents can complete the given sentences, for example in the following manner: I think that circus is good because... and I was surprised that the child had the confidence to... This gives the respondents the opportunity to open up about the most important experiences they've had in the circus. Of course, it is possible to allow the respondents to fill a whole sheet of paper with their impressions on circus, if they wish to do so – it is impossible to know in advance what kind of potential they have for writing if given the chance.
- The open-ended questions should also inquire into things the respondents dislike or would like to change about the circus. This will provide ideas for developing the activity in the future.
- Answering open-ended questions can be made more appealing by formulating the questionnaire in a way that includes only a few of the most important multiple-choice questions or statements, so that the respondents will have the patience to focus on a few open-ended questions as well. Through experience it is possible to find a balance in the ratio of multiple-choice statements to open-ended questions and gain a sense of which questions are most likely to generate the desired information.

Conducting the interviews

The interviews can be executed individually or in small groups of no more than six respondents, but at least a few people should be interviewed. The interviews should be scheduled toward the end of a circus course so that the respondents have had the chance to experience circus and its effects. It is useful to interview the participants as well as the group instructors, teachers and caregivers who have also been involved.

The interview forms in appendix 3 can be modified as needed. The forms were designed for the following respondent groups:

- Circus participants (e.g. the group for children or young people)
- The teachers, instructors, and caregivers who participated in circus (e.g. the nurses who participated with a group for the elderly)
- Families (e.g. in a family rehabilitation center)
- Other relevant groups or people (e.g. experts)

Good practices for conducting the interviews:

- An interview should be limited to 45–60 minutes. When interviewing the circus participants, the interview can take place during the circus lesson, but some time should be reserved for the circus practice itself. A practice session releases energy so it is easier to settle down for a thoughtful discussion. Some participants might not want to spend the entire session on the interview. Nonetheless, the circus experience might lead into very profound discussions as the participants express their opinions in order to affect the circus activity.
- The circus participants might be more comfortable being interviewed individually. At the same time, focus groups might generate ideas that might not have come up in one-to-one interviews.
- The instructors and nurses should be interviewed away from their students or patients so that they can also discuss the issues they cannot talk about in front of the patients. For example when interviewing a group of elderly participants there can first be a group discussion, and then a separate one with the nursing staff who can give a professional analysis of the circus's effects.
- When it comes to immigrants or to people with disabilities, there might be a language barrier. To avoid this, these respondents should be interviewed as a group, together with the group instructor who is in the unique position to witness the direction of the individual development as well as the effects of the circus activity.
- The interviews can be conducted either by the circus instructor or by a third party specialist. In some cases a familiar circus instructor may be better at getting the clients to open up about their experiences. On the other hand, it may be beneficial that the interviewer is an outsider, so that the clients do not have to give their criticism directly to the circus instructor. It might make it easier to voice potential negative experiences and ideas for developing the circus activity. It is also possible that an outsider is less tempted to try and lead the respondents in their answers. For example, in the case of a school class the best interviewer might in some cases be the teacher. The interview may also be carried out by the circus group itself outside the circus lesson – this has been tested with good results.

- The interview should take place in a quiet and comfortable place. When an interview was conducted by a third party researcher with a group of young people, it proved to be a good practice to have the interviewer take part in circus first and form an idea of what it is like. It was also good for the teenagers to see the interviewer actively participating in circus practice. This brought a measure of familiarity and relaxation to the interview. The interview was held in the circus facility after the session, with participants sitting comfortably in a circle.
- The interviewer writes a summary of the results of the interview. It is a good practice to take as many notes as possible and select the most essential information later.
- The interviews should be recorded whenever possible. The recordings allow the researcher to revisit the interviews later and pick up pertinent comments made by the respondents and descriptions on circus activity which may be directly quoted when reporting the research results. The clients' descriptions make the report more colourful and make it possible to look deeper into their experiences and emotions, beyond the statistics and figures. The researcher should always take ample time to listen to and transcribe the recordings.
- In addition to making interviews, the circus actors should converse with the purchaser at certain intervals during the circus courses and continually tune in to the participants' experiences so that they can maintain a sense of what the participants need from the activity and how they wish to develop it. Circus instructors should also make notes of the spontaneous comments heard during circus practice.

Carrying out the interview

- The interview follows a specific plan designed for the particular respondent group.
- It is necessary to make a note of the composition of the group that is about to be interviewed: are they a specialist or a circus target group; how many respondents will give answers, and what is their age and gender distribution.
- The interviewer will explain to the participants that the purpose of the interview is to collect empirical information about social circus activity and its effects on the target group.
- At the beginning of the interview, the participants are assured that answering the questions is voluntary.

- Some themes can be discussed in further detail if they incite discussion and the respondents find them particularly interesting.
- The interviewer should make sure that all the participants in a group have the opportunity to discuss their experiences. Not everyone has to answer every question. Depending on the time allotted for the interview, some questions may be directed to particular respondents.
- Some respondents may not be naturally talkative. Sentence completion has proven to be the most functional type of open-ended question, for example "I was surprised to find that in circus..." and "Circus activity has had a very positive effect on..." Another example of a helpful question would be "If you told your friend about circus what would you say?"
- Interviewers should also make additional questions which help the participants to further expand on the themes, for example the following:
 - What is the best thing in circus? → What makes it so good?
 - What are the areas where you've had most development? → Describe a situation where you've learned something new. What did it feel like? How can you tell you've made progress?
 - A child is excited about circus. → How does the excitement show?
 - A child has developed in circus. → In what way? How does the development show?
 - What do you mean by that answer? Why do you think that is?
- The interviewer should also allow the respondents to discuss effects that have not been anticipated or asked for. It is important to encourage the participants to elaborate on their answers – something that is not possible when using questionnaires.
- The interviewer must not ask the participants any leading questions. If the questions seem to elicit only one-word answers, he can suggest positive, negative or neutral alternatives. For example, if the question is "Do you feel that you have learned new skills in the circus?" the suggestions might be: "Have you learned some tricks, or have you found that your skills haven't really improved?"
- During the interview, the interviewer should make copious notes with as many descriptive words on as wide a spectrum of themes as possible, even writing down whole sentences where convenient. This way, the reporting of the results can be made more colourful with direct quotes from the interviews. If it feels difficult to make notes during the interview it can be recorded and the recordings can be transcribed later.

The following is an example of a transcribed interview. The answers have been written directly on the computer during the interview. The interviewer hasn't written down everything, but he has tried to capture the most essential content while using direct quotations from the interviewees.

An example of interview notes

Interviewer: What do you like best in circus?

Respondents: "It's hard to say, I guess it's that you have a chance to make decisions yourself, our opinions matter, we're not just given a list of things to do. We're putting together a dance number. We have a male instructor working with us, he's more into it than we are, it's funny, it's inspiring, he has the guts to dance with us, he's 'on fire!'"

"The instructors are genuinely excited. It really makes a difference in my motivation if the teacher is like 'whatever'. Quite a lot depends on that, what we are willing to do."

"We get to have a say in what we do."

"It's pretty relaxed."

"We get to do things together, just our class. We haven't argued or shouted at each other even once." ("Honestly that's so true," another one pitches in).

"There's always something to do, you can go and do things and jump around, and in here (in the classroom) we just sit still. We need that kind of chance to let go, to release some energy. Otherwise it would come out in some worse way."

"It's hard for me to concentrate, I keep babbling on; I get shouted at and thrown out of class. There I can let off steam and just go. It's a fun change of pace to school work."

"I'd like the circus lessons to be in the morning to have the chance to let of steam first thing, but this might be good too."

"Our class is sometimes, usually boys versus girls. There we can play for example a game of trust. One falls down and the others catch him. There's no teasing in circus school. But there's shouting and swearing here in class."

"We're all friends here, but we often get into fights. We get sick of seeing each other's faces here in this small class."



KATJA PIKKARAINEN, OULUN TÄHTISIRKUS

To finish the interview, the interviewer can write a summary of the things he finds most memorable in the interview and the overall mood. The following is an example of a summary.

An example of the post-interview notes on the impressions and main topics remembered from the interview

I was left with the impression that the group that is normally restless in a classroom really liked the circus lessons. The circus lessons seem to have a relaxed, positive atmosphere, they have practiced trusting one another, as well as constructive interaction, and they seem less argumentative there. The kids are focused on practising which makes them less eager to fight. They find it particularly rewarding that they have the freedom to decide on the activities. The group spends most of its time in the same classroom, with the same instructors. Circus makes school work less repetitive. What is particularly wonderful is the circus instructors' inspiring and stimulating attitude. There is no hesitation, the children are eager to participate. However, they do associate circus as something more suitable for younger children and they would not take it on as a hobby.



4.4. Analysis and reporting

What follows after the implementation of the surveys and the interviews is the compilation of data, analysis and reporting. The objective is to organise the results into a form that is explicit and easily presentable, with the emphasis on the most central findings. Diverse ways of presenting research results make the material more multidimensional.

Survey analysis

The multiple-choice questions of the survey yield numerical data on circus's effects: how many of the participants enjoyed the circus? How many have learned new skills, built the confidence to perform or found a new friend during circus practice? The following is an example of how the results from the survey can be presented in charts.

To process and analyse the results generated by the questionnaires, the researcher can use spreadsheet applications (e.g. SPSS, Tixel) or online survey software (Google Drive, Digium, Webropol) which are practical and useful especially when processing larger quantities of research data. It is possible to use the software to process the survey results creating distribution tables, charts and, as needed, other kinds of statistical data, such as mean values. They also help to compare the results collected from different respondent groups. The answers given by only a few respondents and the results from individual surveys can be summarised simply by keeping count manually.

Spreadsheet applications can be used to generate illustrative charts from the survey data collected with the multiple-choice questionnaires. It is possible to find both commercial (for example Microsoft Excel) and free-of-charge spreadsheet software (OpenOffice, LibreOffice) which are available for download. A simple bar chart may be all that is needed to illustrate the answer distribution in the multiple-choice questions (image 1). Appendix 4 gives more detailed directions for compiling the answers in a spreadsheet and creating a chart.

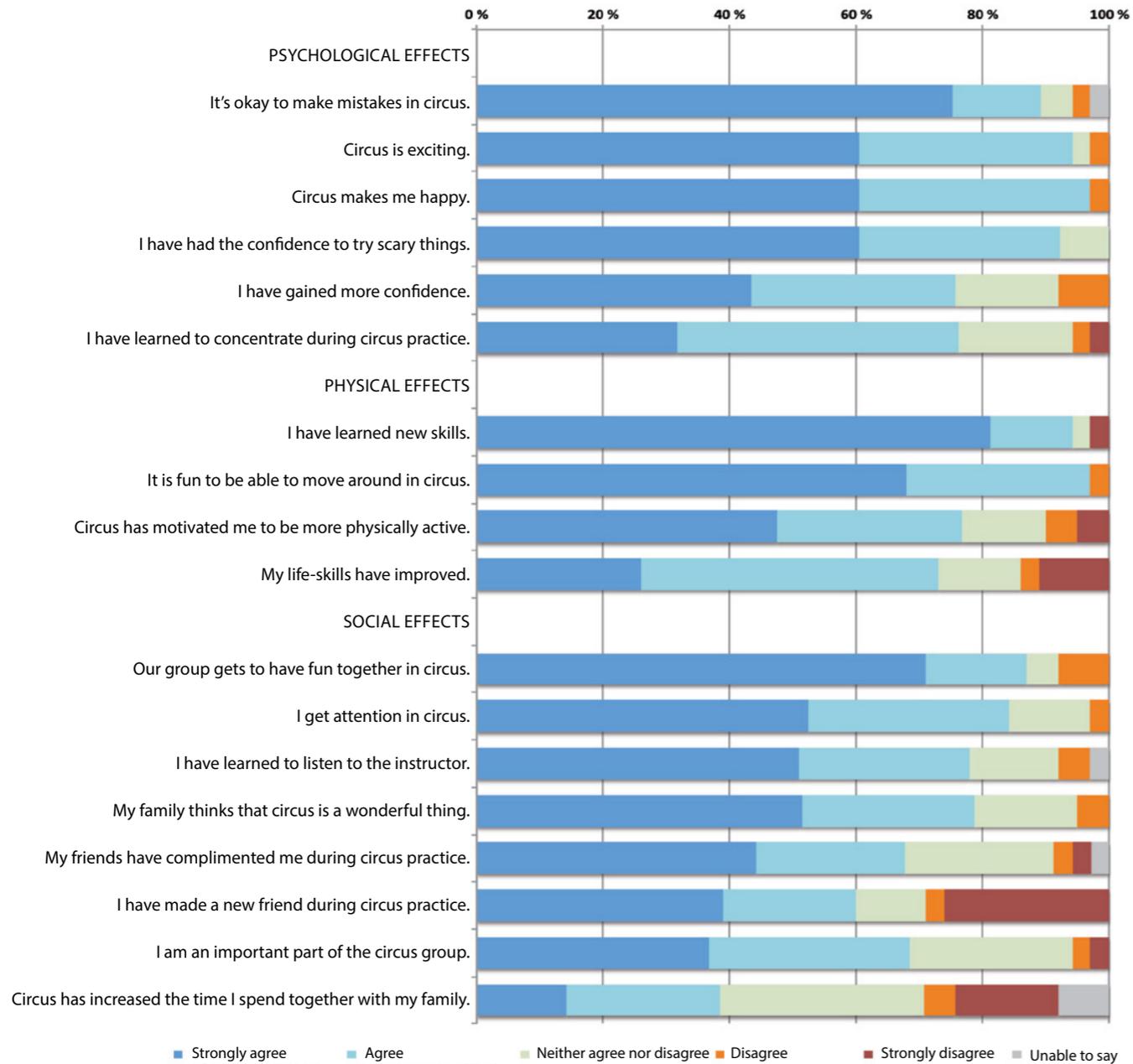


Figure 1. The results from a survey for young people on the effectiveness of circus, n=38 (the n-value stands for the number of respondents to the survey and is always presented together with charts and tables.)

Charts contain a lot of information. The following points can be considered when interpreting charts:

- 1) What are the clients happy with? Are they satisfied with the way things are done? In other words, the researcher must pay attention to the number of respondents who either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' with such statements.

The exemplary chart (figure 1) shows that social circus has many positive psychological, physical and social effects on young people. The chart shows that the participants generally agree that circus is exciting; it makes them happy and encourages them to try new scary things. The atmosphere in the circus is supportive and making mistakes is acceptable. Most of the respondents feel that circus practice has increased their confidence and taught better concentration.

More than 80% of the respondents reported that they have learned new skills in circus. They enjoy the physical activities in circus and 75% report that they are motivated to exercise more even outside circus. Twenty percent of the young people report that their new skills are useful in their everyday lives.

Similar positive interpretations can also be made based on most of the statements concerning the social effects.

- 2) What are the issues most of the clients are unhappy with? What kinds of statements do they most disagree with? What are they least satisfied with?

Because the answers to most of the questions are primarily positive, a few of the statements in the chart may seem negative if the bar shows even a hint of red. Twenty-five percent of the respondents disagree with the statement "I have made a new friend during circus practice." However, the interpretation of the chart has to take into account that some of them may already be familiar with their circus group and have had friends in the circus group already. Secondly, it must be decided what kinds of results are to be thought of as "good." Sixty percent of the respondents, or six teenagers out of ten, reply that they have made a new friend in circus. From this viewpoint, the result may be regarded as positive. Therefore straightforward interpretations cannot be made based on how things seem at first glance.

The results of the survey suggest that among the young people circus has not affected the amount of time they spend with their families. Some of the teenagers believe that they are an important part of the circus group whereas one third of the young people mostly feel like it makes no difference to the group dynamic whether they attend the circus practice or not.



MIA BERGIUS, SORIN SIRKUS

When describing the responses, it is a good practice to use such expressions as “almost everyone”, “the majority,” “over half,” “every third” and “a few of the respondents” to describe the number of respondents or percentages which illustrate how general a certain result has been in a respondent group. It is important to present the number of respondents, their percentage within the target group and the age and gender distribution.

Reporting the results of the survey

Reporting the survey results should be done by discussing the central psychological, physical and social effects in their own paragraphs. In the following example the themes are discussed in the following sequence: psychological and physical effects, a closer examination of the acquisition of confidence, social effects, the factors that make circus practice successful, the factors that should be developed in circus and recommendations based on the results.

The following example reports the results drawn from the multiple-choice questionnaires as presented in image 1, as well as material selected from the answers given to open-ended questions. This kind of survey data already gives a comprehensive overview on the effects of circus on the wellbeing of young people.

An example of reporting survey results

According to the survey, almost every teenager finds circus exciting. The young people take pleasure in the joy of movement and many have been motivated to engage in physical activity elsewhere. Almost all of the young people have learned new skills in circus, such as twirling a hoop, doing tricks with a diabolo, juggling, doing handstands, walking on a wire or riding a unicycle. The teenagers usually discover something in circus that draws their interest, as there are plenty of alternatives. Seven out of ten young people have noticed that the skills learned in circus are useful in other areas of life as well.

Circus has motivated the young people to try even the more challenging stunts and many feel that they have acquired more confidence that way. In circus it is also acceptable to make mistakes without being embarrassed. The young people get to see that no one finds the tricks easy, but trial and error leads to improvement. The young people gain the confidence to try new things such as handstands. One of the teenagers who responded to the survey described that his “fear of heights has become only a distant memory.” Performing in front of others has also increased confidence. Being applauded is reported to be rewarding and gratifying.

The young people get to have fun together in circus. Depending on the composition of the group, many have gotten to make new friends. The majority of the young people feel that they have learned to concentrate better on the tricks that require skill and to listen to the instructor’s advice. In general, the children and the young people feel that they are given attention during the circus sessions and that they can decide what kinds of tricks and exercises they want to practice.

The young people are very capable of explaining what they like about circus. Learning new things is especially inspiring. The most popular items are the trampoline, the aerial silk and the trapeze. Some respondents think that the best part of circus is the energetic instructors; some think the best part is their friends. For many people the warm-up games in the beginning of the practice sessions are an exceptionally fun way to let loose. Many young people don’t want to limit their answers, because they think that the best part of circus is “everything.”

Almost all of the young people hope to be able to continue circus as a hobby even after the course. The young people who took part in the survey could not think of anything that they disliked about circus.

Figure 1 presents the responses of children and young people. These respondents describe circus as having psychological, social, and physical benefits. The survey results demonstrate that circus brings out the best in young people and highlights their abilities. Circus encourages the young people to try their best.

Interview analysis

The purpose of analysis is to generate data about the kinds of effects the circus activity has had. The questions have been divided thematically in the interview forms (appendix 3):

- *The central experiences from circus* are to be covered at the start of the interview. This theme contains general questions about the benefits, challenges and development of circus. If these questions receive comprehensive responses, they serve well as an overview of the essential content.
- *The effects of circus activity (psychological, physical and social)*. These answers will, at best, produce direct information on the effects.
- *The effects of circus on the nursing staff* gives information about how the personnel, for example in treatment facilities, have been affected in terms of the development of their relationships with the inhabitants and how the activity has aided the nursing staff. If the research generates a lot of material on this theme, it can be discussed in a separate chapter.
- *The activity of the circus group and the circus instructor* basically gives information on how to develop the circus activity. It is not necessary to report these results, if they do not create any obvious added value.
- *The storytelling theme* may offer complementary views to the analysis in the form of personal observation. This theme may produce a story to add to the report. Storytelling is the best way to go deeper into the participants' emotions and experiences, which makes a good complementary addition to the quantitative data generated by the multiple-choice measures in the questionnaires.

Analysis in a nutshell:

- When conducting the interview, it is important to try to form a clear picture of the themes that are most essential for the participant. The additional questions will elicit information on these themes. This will make analysis easier.
- As the analysis progresses, it is important to keep refocusing on the essential information. It is possible to start with 20 pages of survey data selecting the central observations – these are often repeated in the text. The entire survey data should be read through, highlighting the essential information. The final conclusion can be summarised using a few central themes.
- The material which is not connected to the theme of the study does not need to be analysed.

- Particular attention should be given to the issues the participant has emphasized. If a teacher reports that circus has absolutely increased the feeling of unity among the pupils the analysis should focus on the study of the social effects. It is important to find out whether anything else in the data supports this statement.
- The most significant statements given in the interviews should be formed into keywords. If the respondent has stated that the pupils show more consideration towards one another, the sentence can be turned into the keyword "enhancement in social interaction."
- The interviewer should write down the most important keywords relating to the effects found in the data. This makes it possible to understand what kinds of effects are most frequently mentioned in the interviews. When collecting a large number of keywords, closely related terms can be combined within the same theme.
- The most important keywords should be made into a list. This can be done by reading the interview data through once more and considering whether the themes relating to the keywords stand out clearly enough. The keyword list can be modified if necessary.

To be remembered when implementing the analysis:

- The person conducting the research should compare the results with a colleague to see if the conclusions match. The researchers can discuss the possible reasons for the differences and find a consensus.
- Researching the effects of circus activity can be compared with writing a minor thesis. It is no more difficult. If there is no one in the circus with experience in writing a thesis or doing minor research, it is possible to consult someone who does.
- The interview data generates information on the effects of the activity, but it also reveals the need for development, so the suggestions for improvement that emerge from the material are very important.

Reporting the interview

The collected data needs to be respected and all the observations must be considered whether negative, neutral or positive. If material is selected during analysis creating results that are favourable to the activity of a particular circus, it will jeopardise the integrity of the entire research. The study must be conducted in a way that is ethical, trustworthy and transparent. Negative feedback makes it possible to develop the activity based on the opinions given by the participants and is therefore highly important.

If the report highlights comments made by individual respondents, they have to be distinguishable from the body of the text. In practice, it is useful to follow the structure: *one of the girls thinks that the most memorable experience has been...* Short quotations should always be placed inside quotation marks.

If the report showcases any individual comment, it should be explained why this has been done. When the different interviews generate similar information, it is not necessary to present quotes. However, if the material is positive throughout, it could be demonstrated with a descriptive remark or portrayal.

If some part of the material clearly indicates the existence of effects, but some other part does not support it, the difference can be reported in the following manner:

Half of the respondents had the opinion that circus had motivated them to be physically active on their leisure time too. One 10-year-old boy started actually using the trampoline that had been in the family home for eight years. However, half of the respondents hadn't changed their exercise habits due to participating in circus activity.

Individual observations that differ from the rest of the material can be reported, if they are shown to be isolated and if reporting them creates obvious added value. For example:

The participants haven't formed new friendships when participating in circus. However, one girl, quite timid, had made friends with a girl her age and had already called her several times.

Based on the interviews circus activity has effects on the participants' motivation to be physically active. One case can be elevated above the others. A 12-year-old girl was so excited about circus that she started jogging regularly to have the stamina to do all the stunts on maximum level throughout the circus lesson.

If the results are greatly divided, this discrepancy should be described:

Based on the data there is great variation in circus's effects on mood. Approximately every other respondent had no opinion on the topic at all, one third felt they had experienced a certain amount of positive effects and every sixth respondent related having negative experiences.

The interview results should be reported clearly and concisely. It is not sensible to report the results received for every interview question. If the responses clearly produce some added value, it should be noted. The respondents may, for example, talk extensively about the positive effects on social interaction, but the responses on general enthusiasm may be short and ambiguous. In

such cases the report can be made to include only social interaction, or add that there were no parallel changes in the participants' enthusiasm, but that the experiences were varied.

The style and structure of reporting can be decided by the researcher. However, if the report is used in communication with municipal decision-makers, the language and the style should be adjusted in accordance with the existing practices and requirements. The report can be very concise – it can be assumed that everyone can stand to read one sheet of text. The first paragraph should present the main points about circus activity – it should be written while keeping in mind that the potential reader may not continue to read the document any further. Therefore, the beginning should convey the information that is most central to the reader. This central message should be circus activity's positive effect on wellbeing:

Circus activity has many physical, psychological and social benefits, or some specific observation: The young people at risk of exclusion will make new social contacts when participating in circus activity.

After the first paragraph, it is possible to go into further detail. A good division might be to describe the social, psychological and physical effects in their own paragraphs. These paragraphs should describe the effects:

Almost every respondent who participated in family circus felt that thanks to the circus activity the family had started to spend more leisure time together as well and where necessary the researcher can give an enlightening example: One family had started to exercise together due to participating in circus.

All such things should be reported which might be interesting to the potential reader. If the reader is a coordinator in municipal sport management, he or she will most likely be interested in the physical benefits of the circus activity. However, if there are no such effects it may not be necessary to communicate this to a municipal cultural coordinator.

There is no need to go into too much detail; the essential knowledge has to be separated from the non-essential. A report on the effects of circus activity should stick to that.

An example of an interview report

The physical effects of circus are the most visible. Many children manifest better muscular fitness, physical stamina and body perception, better quality of movement, mobility of the body and flexibility. A good example of this is a child who is paralysed on one side. His hand on that side does not function, but due to circus activity the weaker hand was activated and he was able to use this hand at the final performance of the circus.

The psychological effects are better manifested on an individual level. A good example is a girl with multiple disabilities who, according to her mother, has become more joyful and confident thanks to taking on circus as a hobby. She had not previously engaged in any leisure activity at all. The girl has acquired more confidence, for example her use of space is now more varied than before. Her spatial visualisation has also improved. The girl has enjoyed giving performances which the girl's mother sees as wonderful experiences that offer everyone a little taste of stardom, in spite of having multiple disabilities.

The social effects are clearly manifested among the children, because they have the opportunity to collaborate with other participants who might have multiple disabilities. Children with disabilities can bond with others. The hobby may also bring families closer. For example, one girl has quite a long way to travel to circus practice. When her father drives her there and back, the two of them can spend time together. The journey has been something for them to share.

The results of circus practice depend on what each of the participant wants. For instance, the group-specific goals for the visually impaired have been increasing interaction, developing self-expression, strengthening friendships, testing their limits and practicing balance and coordination. The activity has been supportive of these goals, the friendships become stronger and everyone has tested their limits.

Compiling the results

The survey and interview results must be combined in a report, if the effects data on the target group has been gathered by using various different methods. A good practice is to indicate which of the results is based on a wider selection of survey and interview data, and which is based on individual responses or interviews.

The survey and interview data are complementary. For instance, survey data covering the entire respondent group gives statistical information. The surveys can be used to devise indicators whose results are comparable: for example how many participants have had significant experiences of success in circus, and how many have had improvements in physical abilities. The interview data gives more detailed descriptions and examples on how the themes appear in the life of a participant, and what kinds of emotions they evoke in the participants and their families.

5. HOW TO BEGIN CONDUCTING A STUDY

Conducting research requires time, planning, organising and know-how. It is possible to collaborate with professional researchers, but there are certain things that can be done independently. So, where to begin?

1. The participants should be asked to give feedback, perhaps with a short survey. It is beneficial to formulate a few multiple-choice and open-ended questions and put them in the feedback questionnaire. The survey can be carried out at the end of the circus lesson. The results of a short survey can be counted by hand if it is not possible to use spreadsheet software. It is also useful to write down the answers to open-ended questions.
2. A few of the clients who are most willing to give feedback can be interviewed. It's a good idea just to let the conversation flow freely. The interviewer can make notes of the answers as she is listening, but she needs to make sure that the material is not too scarce, and she should simultaneously record the interview and transcribe it later. Genuine accounts and incisive comments are best for clarifying the circus experiences and its effects.
3. The results from surveys and interviews should be compiled in a concise but descriptive report. The survey results can be presented in tables, for example in bar charts that describe the distribution of responses. The interviews can be written in the form of stories. A report, a few pages in length, that showcases the main results of social circus, often serves better than a large research package consisting of dozens of pages.
4. Lengthier research can be conducted in collaboration with specialists. Researchers can assist in some stages of the study or execute it in its entirety. It is beneficial to work in close co-operation with the researchers so that they receive important support while executing the study.

Appendix 2: Survey Questionnaires

Survey for the parent/caregiver of a child/young person FORM FOR THE PARENT/CAREGIVER/PRIMARY NURSE, INITIAL MEASUREMENT

In this survey, we ask the parent or caregiver of the child or young person starting circus activity to assess his/her situation as well as his/her expectations for the circus activity. During the final stages of the circus course, we will implement a second survey examining the effects circus has had on the child/young person. With this survey, we study the effects of the circus activity. We welcome any kind of information you have to offer concerning your experiences in circus, as this can be beneficial in the further development of circus activity.

Name of the child's/young person's circus group: _____

Date: _____

Respondent:

1. The child/young person participating in circus
2. The mother/father of the child/young person
3. The primary nurse of the child/young person
4. Group instructor
5. Other (indicate relationship)

1. Assess the child's/young person's life situation prior to circus activity.

Circle the suitable number on a scale of 1-5 (5=strongly agree... 1=strongly disagree,?=Unable to answer)

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| The child is generally satisfied with his/her life. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child feels that he/she possesses positive qualities. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child feels that he/she excels at least in one area in life. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has good concentration. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child expresses him-/herself with confidence. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child often experiences the joy of success. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has at least one good friend whom he/she meets weekly. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has good relationships with other people. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has pleasant experiences from being in a group. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child will easily make contact with other people. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child frequently receives positive feedback from other people.. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child considers him-/herself equal to other people. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child shows patience when interacting with others. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| In the last year | | | | | |
| The child has taken part in regular physical exercise. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has had an exciting hobby. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has spent his/her time engaged in inspiring activities. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has taken part in an activity which develops his/her concentration. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

2. Questions to the parent/guardian

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| We often spend time together as a family. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I frequently share pleasant moments with the child. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I have a good relationship with the child. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

3. Questions concerning a child/young person in need of special care

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| The child has had a hobby which promotes physical ability. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I have a good sense of the child's skills and what he/she is capable of. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

4. Evaluate whether the child experiences difficulties with the following issues

| | Hardly ever or never | Occasionally | Often or constantly | Unable to say |
|--|----------------------|--------------|---------------------|---------------|
| The child suffers from loneliness. | 3 | 2 | 1 | ? |
| The child has experienced melancholy for a long time. | 3 | 2 | 1 | ? |
| The child withdraws from the company of others. | 3 | 2 | 1 | ? |
| The child gets into fights which are difficult to resolve. | 3 | 2 | 1 | ? |

5. Rank the three things you most look forward to in the circus activity

(1=most important, 2=second in importance, 3=third in importance)

- ___ The child makes new friends
- ___ A sense of togetherness with the other children
- ___ Physical activity
- ___ Learning new skills
- ___ Improvement in physical ability
- ___ Pleasant experiences
- ___ Activities that uplift the mood
- ___ A good connection to the grown-up working as the instructor
- ___ Confidence in self-expression
- ___ Other, what: _____

6. The child has difficulties managing the following tasks: _____

Background information of the child/young person participating in circus

7. The child/young person participating in circus is a **2. boy**
1. girl **8. The child/young person is _____ years old**

Name of the child: _____

The names are collected to match and compare the information gathered in this survey with that conducted during the final stages of the circus course. The information will be kept confidential.

Thank you for answering! Please return the survey questionnaire to your circus instructor.

Survey for the parent/caregiver of a child/young person
FORM FOR THE PARENT/CAREGIVER/PRIMARY NURSE, FINAL MEASUREMENT

In this survey, we ask a parent or caregiver of the child or young person participating in circus to assess his/her experiences in circus activity and its effects on the child. The survey is linked to the one administered at the beginning of the circus activity and serves as a point of reference. With this survey, we study the effects of circus activity. The information is used to develop social circus activity further.

Name of the child's/young person's circus group: _____

Date: _____

Respondent:

1. The child/young person participating in circus
2. The mother/father of the child/young person
3. The primary nurse of the child/young person
4. Group instructor
5. Other (indicate relationship)

1. Evaluate the child's/young person's life situation after the circus activity.

Circle the appropriate number on a scale of 1 to 5 (5=strongly agree ... 1=strongly disagree, ?=Unable to answer)

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| The child has at least one good friend in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has had a feeling of belonging to the circus group. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child is eager to make contact with other people in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has a good relationship with the circus instructor. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child's wishes have been taken into consideration in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child receives plenty of positive feedback in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has a sense of equality with others in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child listens well to the instructions in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child shows patience in the circus group. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has regularly participated in circus activity. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Complete the sentences:

In my opinion, the best part of circus is _____

I was surprised that the child/young person had the confidence to _____

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| The child has at least one good friend in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has had a feeling of belonging to the circus group. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child is eager to make contact with other people in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has a good relationship with the circus instructor. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child's wishes have been taken into consideration in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child receives plenty of positive feedback in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has a sense of equality with others in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child listens well to the instructions in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child shows patience in the circus group. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has regularly participated in circus activity. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Circus activity has had a very positive impact in _____

2. Questions to the parent/guardian

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Circus has increased the sense of unity in our family. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus has increased the time we spend together as a family. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus has created many pleasant moments with the child. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I have a good relationship with the child. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus has brought us closer to the child. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

3. Questions concerning a child/young person requiring special care

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Circus has developed the child's functional ability. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I have a good sense of the child's skills and abilities. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus has enabled me to get a better sense of the child's skills. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Circus has improved the child's ability to manage the following tasks: _____

Background information of the child/young person participating in circus

The child/young person participating in circus is a
 1. girl 2. boy
 The child/young person is _____ years old

Name of the child: _____

The names are collected to match and compare information gathered in this survey with that collected at the beginning of the circus course. The information will be kept confidential.

Thank you for answering! Please return the questionnaire to your circus instructor.

Hello, Circus Fan!

FORM FOR THE CHILDREN

We want to know what you think about circus. Please tell us!

Name of your circus

group: _____

Do you have a good time in the circus (circle the number of the best answer)

1. Very much so.
2. Sometimes.
3. Not very much.
4. Never.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about circus?

Circle the emoticon that best corresponds with your feelings.

☺ = Agree, 😐 = Neither agree nor disagree, ☹ = Disagree

| | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree |
|--|-------|---------------------------------|----------|
| Circus is exciting. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |
| Circus brings me joy. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |
| I have learned to concentrate in circus. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |

What have you particularly liked in circus? _____

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| I have had the confidence to try scary things. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |
| I have become braver in circus. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |
| It's okay to make mistakes in circus. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |

What do you have more confidence in? _____

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| It's fun to be able to move around in the circus. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |
| I have learned new skills in circus. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |
| Circus has motivated me to move more. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |

What kinds of skills have you learned in circus? _____

| | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree |
|--|-------|---------------------------------|----------|
| I have found a new friend in circus. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |
| I have learned to listen to the instructor. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |
| We get to have a good time together in circus. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |
| I am given attention in circus. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |
| I am an important part of the circus group. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |
| My friends have told me I'm good at circus tricks. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |
| My family thinks circus is a fun thing. | ☺ | 😐 | ☹ |

Is there anything that bothers you or something that is difficult in circus? If so, what? _____

Background information

I am a

1. girl
2. boy

My age is _____ **years**

I have been to circus

1. once
2. 2-5 times
3. 6-10 times
4. more than 10 times

Do you want to continue with circus?

1. Yes I do. Why? _____
2. No I don't.
Why not? _____
3. I can't say.

Thank you for answering!

Please return the form to your circus instructor.

Hello, Circus Fan!

FORM FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE

Please use this form to let us know what you think about the circus activity.

Name of your circus group: _____

I think that circus is (circle the number of the best answer):

1. great fun
2. fun
3. not much fun
4. no fun at all

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about circus?

Circle the appropriate number on a scale of 1 to 5 (5=strongly agree ... 1=strongly disagree)

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|-------------------|-------|---------------------------------|----------|----------------------|
| Circus is exciting. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus brings me joy. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I have learned to concentrate in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

What have you particularly liked in circus? _____

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have had the confidence to try scary things. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I have gained more confidence in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| It's okay to make mistakes in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

What kinds of things do you have more confidence to do? _____

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It is fun to be able to move around in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I have learned new skills in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus has motivated me to move more. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus has taught me skills that are useful in everyday life. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

What kinds of skills have you learned in circus? _____

| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|-------------------|-------|---------------------------------|----------|----------------------|
|-------------------|-------|---------------------------------|----------|----------------------|

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have found a new friend in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I have learned to listen to the instructor. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| We have a good time together in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I am given attention in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I am an important part of circus group. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| My friends have complimented me on doing well in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| My family thinks that circus is a fun thing. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus has increased the time I spend together with my family. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Is there anything that bothers you, or something that is difficult in circus? Please explain. _____

Background information

I am a

1. girl
2. boy

My age is _____ years

I have been to circus

1. once
2. 2-5 times
3. 6-10 times
4. more than 10 times

Do you want to continue with circus?

1. Yes I do. Why? _____
2. No I don't. Why not? _____
3. I can't say.

Complete the sentence:

My best memory from circus is _____

Thank you for answering!

Please return the form to your circus instructor.

Survey for the circus participant's parents, caregivers and schoolteachers

Please use this form to explain your views on the child's/young person's activity in circus. With this survey, we study the effects of the circus activity. The information is used to develop the circus activity further.

Name of the child's/young person's circus group: _____

Date: _____

Respondent:

1. The child's/young person's mother or father
2. The child's/young person's primary nurse
3. Group instructor/teacher
4. Other (indicate relationship)

In the following, evaluate the meaning and effects of the circus activity on the child/young person.

Circle the best alternative on a scale of 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree ... 5=strongly agree)

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| The child enjoys him-/herself in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child is excited about circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus is uplifting. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus has improved the child's ability to concentrate. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Complete the sentence:

What I find particularly great in circus is _____

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Circus has encouraged the child to express him-/herself. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has learned new skills in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus has given the child many experiences of success. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

I was surprised that the child/young person had the confidence to _____

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Circus has increased the child's physical activity. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child's body control has improved. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus has strengthened the child's life skills. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

The circus activity has had a very positive effect on _____

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| The child has a good relationship with the other members in his/her group. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child fits in well with his/her circus group. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The circus group has a good time together in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child has been able to have a say on what is done in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child receives attention in the circus group. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The child receives good feedback in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Our co-operation with the circus instructor has been effortless. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The circus instructor gives clear directions. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The circus instructor is a good leader for the group. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The circus group practices tricks that are appropriately difficult. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The circus group concentrates well. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Questions to the parent/guardian

In my opinion, circus is a good hobby for a child/young person.

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Our family thinks that circus is a great thing. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Our family is interested in the child's circus activity. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus has increased the time we spend together as a family. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

The questions concerning a child/young person in need of special care

Caring for the child has gotten easier due to the circus activity.

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have a better idea of the child's abilities due to circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I have gotten great ideas for the things I can do together with the child. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Circus has improved the child's ability to manage with the following daily tasks: _____

Is there anything that bothers you or something that is difficult in circus? Describe these experiences.

Background information of the child/young person participating in circus

The child/young person participating in circus is a _____ The child/young person is _____ years old
 1. girl
 2. boy

The child/young person has participated in the circus activity (over the past 12 months)

1. once 2. 2-5 times 3. 6-10 times 4. more than 10 times

Do you wish for the child/young person to continue with circus?

1. Yes I do. Why? _____
2. No I don't. Why not? _____
3. I can't say.

Thank you for answering! Please return the form to your circus instructor.

A survey for the family member/nurse of the elderly circus participant

THE FAMILY MEMBER/NURSE HAS TAKEN PART IN CIRCUS TOGETHER WITH THE ELDERLY PARTICIPANT.

Please use this form to describe the observations you have made of the elderly person regarding the circus activity: How has the elderly person experienced the circus activity and what kinds of effects have you noticed from the circus activity? Using this survey, we study the effects of circus activity. The information is used to develop circus activity further.

Name of circus: _____

Name of the elderly person's circus group _____

Date: _____

Respondent:

1. The elderly person's family member/primary nurse
2. A nurse in an elderly care facility/service housing unit
3. The elderly person him-/herself
4. Other (indicate relationship)

A. QUESTIONS FOR NURSES WHO CO-PARTICIPATED IN CIRCUS.

Evaluate the significance and effects of the circus activities on the elderly person.

Circle the appropriate number on a scale of 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree ... 5=strongly agree)

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| The elderly person enjoys him-/herself in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The elderly person is re-energised in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The elderly person participates in circus with great concentration. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The elderly person is able to use his/her strengths in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The elderly person has learned new skills in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The elderly person rejoices in his/her abilities in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Complete the sentence:

I can see that the elderly person is enjoying him-/herself in circus particularly well when _____

Circus has increased the elderly person's willingness to communicate.

5 4 3 2 1

There is a good team spirit in circus.

5 4 3 2 1

The elderly person likes being touched in circus.

5 4 3 2 1

The group activity in circus was particularly enjoyable for the elderly person because _____

The group activity in the circus was particularly enjoyable for the elderly person because _____

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| The elderly person has become more self-reliant in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The elderly person moves with greater agility than usual in circus | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The elderly person's skills of daily living have improved due to circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

I was surprised that the elderly person was able to _____

The co-operation between the circus instructor and the group

The co-operation between the circus instructor and the nursing staff is effortless.

5 4 3 2 1

The circus instructor gives clear directions to elderly people.

5 4 3 2 1

The circus instructor is a good leader for the whole group.

5 4 3 2 1

The tricks are appropriately challenging.

5 4 3 2 1

The circus group concentrates well on the exercises.

5 4 3 2 1

The nursing staff's views on circus in elderly care

In my opinion, circus is a particularly suitable hobby for an elderly person.

5 4 3 2 1

The treatment of the elderly person has gotten easier due to circus.

5 4 3 2 1

Circus has increased the things we do together with the elderly people.

5 4 3 2 1

Circus has allowed me to form a better connection with the elderly person.

5 4 3 2 1

Circus has given me a better idea of the elderly person's abilities.

5 4 3 2 1

Circus has provided me with new ways to motivate the elderly person.

5 4 3 2 1

Circus has provided me with ideas for physical activities for the elderly.

5 4 3 2 1

I have gotten ideas for things to do in the elderly people's group activity.

5 4 3 2 1

I have used the ideas I've gotten in circus in my work.

5 4 3 2 1

The nursing staff thinks that circus is a nice thing.

5 4 3 2 1

Circus has increased my enjoyment in interacting with the elderly people on a daily basis.

5 4 3 2 1

Circus has improved the atmosphere in the work community.

5 4 3 2 1

In my experience, circus is particularly supportive in elderly care because _____

B. QUESTIONS FOR THE ENTIRE NURSING STAFF.

Choose an alternative based on whether the elderly person needs support in it and whether he/she has received the necessary support in circus activity.

| | The elderly person doesn't need support | Circus has had a positive effect | Circus has had no effect | Circus has had a negative effect |
|--|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Improvement of the mood. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Becoming re-energised. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Concentration in the activity. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Sharing enjoyable moments with other participants. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| More interaction with others. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| More willingness to do things for him-/herself. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Better skills of daily living. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| More motivational activity. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Upkeep of physical mobility. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Better quality of sleep. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Increased appetite. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Ability to take others into consideration. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Co-operation when given treatment. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Acceptance of being touched. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Restraining from violent impulses. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Have you noticed anything that bothers you in the circus activity?

- no
- yes

Negative emotions:

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Circus creates anxiety for the elderly person. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus causes difficult transitions from one facility to the next. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The elderly person experiences circus as physically too tiring. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Organising circus activity is too difficult for the nurses. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

What other things that trouble you? _____

C. BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE ELDERLY PERSON PARTICIPATING IN CIRCUS ACTIVITY.

The circus participant is

- female.
- male.

Does the elderly person suffer from a memory disorder?

- no
- yes, mild memory impairment
- yes, moderate memory impairment
- yes, advanced memory impairment

The elderly person has participated in the circus activity (over the past 12 months)

- once
- 2-5 times
- 6-10 times
- more than 10 times

Do you think that the elderly person should continue with the circus?

- Yes I do Why? _____
- No I don't. Why not? _____
- I can't say.

Thank you for answering! Please return the form to the circus instructor.

A survey for the families who participated in family circus.
Please use this form to explain your views on circus activity.

FORM FOR FAMILIES.

Circus group/facility where you took part in circus: _____

Our family thinks that circus is (circle the number of the best alternative)

1. Great fun.
2. Quite nice.
3. Not much fun.
4. Not nice at all.
5. Hard to say, our experiences vary.

Does your family agree or disagree to the following issues concerning circus?

Circle the best alternative on the scale of 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree ... 5=strongly agree)

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| We find circus very motivating. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus brings more energy. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| We have a good time together at circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus is something we are all interested in. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| We encourage each other during the circus activity. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Our family has had the confidence to try scary things. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| We have learned new skills in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| It's okay to fail in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus creates joy of success. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

What does your family think is particularly enjoyable in circus? _____

Is there some element in circus that your family finds troubling? Describe these experiences.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Circus has increased the time we spend together as a family. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Our idea of our child's abilities has improved due to circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Circus has strengthened our parent-child relationship. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| It is enjoyable to be physically active in circus. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| We talk about circus together as a family. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Complete the sentence:

Our best memories from circus have been _____

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| It's been easy working together with the circus instructor. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The circus instructor gives clear directions. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The circus instructor directs our family with skill. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The difficulty level of the circus exercises is suitable. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

How would you develop the circus instruction? _____

Background information of your family

The circus participants in our family are

1. child/children
2. mother
3. father
4. some other family member (indicate who) _____

The age group of the participating children

1. younger than school age
2. primary school level
3. lower secondary level

Did everyone in your family who came to the child and family services center also take part in the circus activity?

1. yes
2. no

We have participated in the circus activity _____ times

Thank you for answering!

Please return the form to your circus instructor.

Appendix 3: Interview forms

Use the following interview forms when interviewing the different target or respondent groups of the circus activity.

1. Interview form for adults and young people.

Interview respondent groups:

- a) The children, young people and adults who participated in circus with the intention to enhance their learning ability and life management skills.
- b) Adult substance abuse and mental health rehabilitants.

Interview questions:

1) The most central experiences from circus

- a) What has circus been like?
- b) What is the best part of circus?
- c) How could the circus activity be changed? What didn't you like?

2) The effects of circus activity (psychological, social, physical)

- a) Has circus changed
 1. the way you interact with others at school? How?
 2. the way you interact at home? How?
 3. the way you spend your leisure time?

b) Have you made friends in circus?

c) What are your other hobbies? How is circus different from your other hobbies?

3) Activity of the circus group and instructor

- a) Has your circus group learned to work together as a team?
- b) Has the circus activity had an effect on your group's team spirit?
- c) Would you like to continue circus as a hobby? (don't ask this, if there are no plans to continue the course)
- d) How would you change the circus instruction?
- e) What is the appropriate length and frequency of the circus sessions?

4) Storytelling

- a) Have you learned anything new in circus?
- b) Have you had any surprises in circus? Can you elaborate on the situation/issue?
- c) Have you encountered something scary in circus?
- d) How would you briefly describe the circus activity to your friends using only one or two sentences?
- e) What is your best memory from circus?

2. Interview form for the family circus

Interview respondent group:

Families who have participated in circus (e.g. families from family rehabilitation centres, family circus, mother and child homes and women's shelters)

Interview questions:

1) The most central circus experiences

- a) What has circus been like?
- b) What is the best part of circus? (everyone answers)
- c) How could the circus activity be changed? What didn't you like? (everyone answers)

2) The effects of circus activity (psychological, social, physical)

- a) Has circus changed some aspect in other areas of your life? How?
- b) Do you share hobbies as a family? How is circus different from them?
- c) Has circus had an effect on the interaction within your family? How?

3) The activity of the circus group and the instructor

- a) How does the family circus function as a group?
- b) What has the circus instructor succeeded in?
- c) How would you change the circus instruction?
- d) Would you like the circus course to continue? Why?
- e) What is the appropriate length and frequency of the circus sessions?

4) Storytelling

- a) Have you learned anything new in circus?
- b) Have you had any surprises in circus? Describe this kind of situation/issue. (everyone answers)

- c) Have you encountered something scary in circus?
- d) How would you briefly describe the circus experience in one or two sentences?
- e) What is your best memory from circus?

3. Interview form for the geriatric nursing staff

Interview respondent group:

The nursing staff caring for the elderly circus participants.

Interview questions:

1) The most central experiences from circus

- a) What were your expectations from the circus activity? Have your expectations been met?
- b) What are the benefits of circus?
- c) How could the circus activity be changed? What didn't you like?
- d) What other kinds of stimulating activities do you offer to the elderly? How is circus different from them?

2) The effects of circus activity (psychological, social, physical)

- a) What are the effects that circus has had on the elderly? Such as:
 - the mood?
 - concentration?
 - confidence?
 - the elderly person's physical mobility?
 - the amount of medication?
 - level of alertness (sleep, tranquillity)?
 - management of daily routines?
- b) Has circus had an effect on the elderly person's interaction
 - with his/her family?
 - with the other elderly people/inhabitants?
 - with the nursing staff?
- c) Who would benefit from circus? How and why?
- d) Who wouldn't benefit from circus?

3) The effects of circus activity on the nursing staff

- a) What kinds of effects has circus had on working with the client? In terms of:
 - 1) motivating the client
 - 2) managing daily chores together with the client
 - 3) organising and developing common activities together with the client
 - 4) your own attitudes towards elderly care
 - 5) your own ability to cope at work
 - 6) the atmosphere at work
- b) How have you experienced your own role in circus?

4) The activity of the circus instructor

- a) What factors make circus for the elderly successful and ensure its high quality?
- b) What is the appropriate length and frequency of the circus sessions?

5) Storytelling

What is your best memory from circus?

4. Interview form for a specialist in visual impairment

Interview respondent group

A specialist in the care of children with visual impairment.

Interview questions:

1) The most central experiences from circus

- a) How would you describe the activity with visually impaired children?
- b) What are the benefits of practising circus with visually impaired children?
- c) What are the challenges of circus practice for visually impaired children? How could these issues be further developed?

2) The effects of circus activity (psychological, social, physical)

a) Have you noticed that circus affects the participant's:

- 1) mood and concentration
- 2) confidence
- 3) physical mobility and body control
- 4) spatial visualisation
- 5) management of daily routines

b) How would you describe circus's potential for offering peer support for the families?

c) Have you observed any effects of circus in the daily interaction among the visually impaired children?

d) Who would benefit the most from circus?

e) Is circus suitable for all visually impaired people?

3) The effects of circus activity on the nursing staff

a) How has circus affected the activity with the children? In terms of:

- 1) motivating the children
- 2) managing the daily chores effortlessly together with the child
- 3) experiencing being touched by others
- 4) organising and developing shared activities

4) The activity of the circus group and the instructor

a) How have the circus participants reacted

–to the other group members and working together in a group?

–to the instructor (when compared with, e.g., the teacher at school)?

b) Has circus offered a suitable amount of physical exertion?

c) What do you see as positive in the circus instructor's activity?

d) How would you develop the circus instruction?

e) What is the appropriate length and frequency of the circus sessions?

5) Storytelling

a) Have you encountered any surprises in circus?

b) What is your best memory from circus?

c) How would you describe your experiences from circus in one or two sentences?



JOONAS MARTIKAINEN, CROSS-ART COLLECTIVE PISTE

5. Interview form for families with babies and child and family specialists

Interview respondent group:

The parents who have participated in baby circus, prenatal care workers and the personnel at residential family centres.

Interview questions:

1) The most central experiences from circus

a) What has circus been like? Has it met with your expectations?

b) What is the best part of circus? (everyone answers)

c) How should baby circus be developed? (everyone answers)

2) The effects of circus activity (psychological, social, physical)

a) Have you noticed that circus has affected the baby's

- 1) mood
- 2) confidence
- 3) physical mobility
- 4) body control

b) Does circus strengthen the skills the baby's family needs to care for the baby? What kinds of skills are these?

c) Have you detected any effects that circus has had on the family interaction?

3) The effects of circus activity on the staff

How has circus affected working with the client family? In terms of:

- 1) motivating the client
- 2) managing daily activities effortlessly with the client
- 3) being touched by others
- 4) organising and developing activities together with the client
- 5) the working atmosphere

4) The activity of the circus group and the instructor

a) How have the circus participants reacted to

- the other members of the group?
- the workers in prenatal care or reception home?
- the circus instructors (when compared with the workers in prenatal care/reception home)?

b) What is positive in the circus instructor's activity?

c) How would you develop the circus instruction?

d) What characteristics make baby circus successful and ensure its high quality?

– what would you say is the appropriate number of participants in this kind of group?

e) What is the appropriate number of circus sessions?

Would you like for circus to continue?

5) Storytelling

a) Have you encountered any surprises in circus? Elaborate on such a situation/issue (everyone answers).

b) How would you describe your experiences from circus briefly in one or two sentences? (everyone answers)

6. Interview form for the group instructors of children, young people and adults

Interview respondent group:

The group instructors for the children's, young people's and adults' groups where the intention is to develop the learning ability and life management skills, or provide substance abuse and mental health rehabilitation

Interview questions:

1) The most central experiences from circus

a) What did you imagine the activity would be like? Has it met with your expectations?

b) What is positive in circus? (everyone answers)

c) How should the circus activity be changed? What didn't you like?

d) What other hobbies/recreational activities/similar activities are offered for young people? How is circus different from them?

2) The effects of circus activity (psychological, social, physical)

a) What kind of effects has circus had on young people? Such as:

- mood?
- concentration?
- confidence?
- energy?
- tranquillity?
- physical mobility and body control?
- social interaction?
- the management of daily routines?

b) Has circus had an impact on the young people's interaction with

- their families?
- other kids?
- instructors, teachers?

c) Who would benefit from circus? How and why?

d) Who wouldn't benefit from circus?

3) The effects of the circus activity on the instructors

- a) How has circus affected working with the young people? In terms of:
- 1) their motivation
 - 2) the ease of collaboration (behaviour, discipline)
 - 3) your own motivation/attitude towards work
 - 4) your own ability to cope at work
 - 5) the working atmosphere
- b) How would you describe your own role in the circus?

4) The activity of the circus group and the instructor

- a) What characteristics make the circus successful for young people and ensure its high quality?
- b) What is the appropriate length and number of circus sessions?

5) Storytelling

What is your best memory from circus? (everyone answers)

7. Interview form for the instructors of child welfare client families

Interview respondent group:

Instructors in family rehabilitation centres and child welfare family services.

Interview questions:

1) The most central experiences from circus

- a) What did you imagine the activity would be like? Has it met with your expectations?
- b) What are the most positive characteristics of circus?
- c) How should the circus activity be changed? What didn't you like?
- d) What other hobbies/recreational activities/similar activities are offered for the families? How is circus different from them?

2) The effects of circus activity (psychological, social, physical)

- a) What kind of effects has circus had on families? Such as:
- mood?
 - confidence?

- tranquillity?
- physical mobility and body control?
- social interaction?
- the management of daily routines?

- b) Has circus had an impact on the interaction
- within families?
 - with other families?
 - instructors?

- c) What kinds of families benefit from circus? How and why?
- d) What kinds of families do not benefit from circus?

3) The effects of circus activity on the instructors

- a) How has circus affected working with the families? In terms of
- 1) motivating the families
 - 2) the ease of collaboration
 - 3) your own motivation/attitude towards work
 - 4) your own ability to cope at work
 - 5) the working atmosphere
- b) How would you describe your own role in the circus?

4) The activity of the circus group and the instructor

- a) What characteristics make the family circus successful and ensure its high quality?
- b) What is the appropriate length and number of circus sessions?

5) Storytelling

What is your best memory from circus? (everyone answers)

8. Interview form for the circus instructors on directing a circus group

Interview respondent:

The circus instructor

Interview questions:

A) Directing a circus group

1) the most central experiences from directing a circus group

- a) What has it been like instructing this circus group?
- b) What has been particularly successful?
- c) What has been most challenging?

2) The effects of circus activity (psychological, social, physical)

- a) What kind of effects has circus had on the target group? Such as:
 - mood?
 - concentration?
 - confidence?
 - energy level?
 - tranquillity?
 - physical mobility and body control?
 - social interaction?
 - the management of daily routines?

b) Who would benefit from circus? How and why?

d) Who would not benefit from circus?

3) The effects of circus activity on the instructors

- a) How has circus affected the instructors?
- b) How has the interaction between the group and their own instructor developed?

4) Storytelling

What is your best circus memory in terms of this group?

B) Circus activity in general

- 1) Why is circus activity effective? Describe your most central observations.
- 2) What kinds of groups manifest the effects most clearly? What kinds of effects? Why?
- 3) The most central experiences of success from working with circus groups?
- 4) The most central challenges in working with circus groups?
- 5) Describe a positive memory from a situation where you noticed the positive effects of circus activity?

Appendix 4: Processing survey data using spreadsheet software

It is a good idea to use spreadsheet software to process the answers to the multiple-choice questions and use them to create charts depicting the distribution of answers. If you get answers only from a few respondents, or from a singular survey, the results can be summarised by counting them by hand and compiling the numbers in a chart. You can use Microsoft Excel or some other spreadsheet programme, such as OpenOffice or LibreOffice, which can be downloaded from the programme's website free of charge. The example below has been created by using Excel.

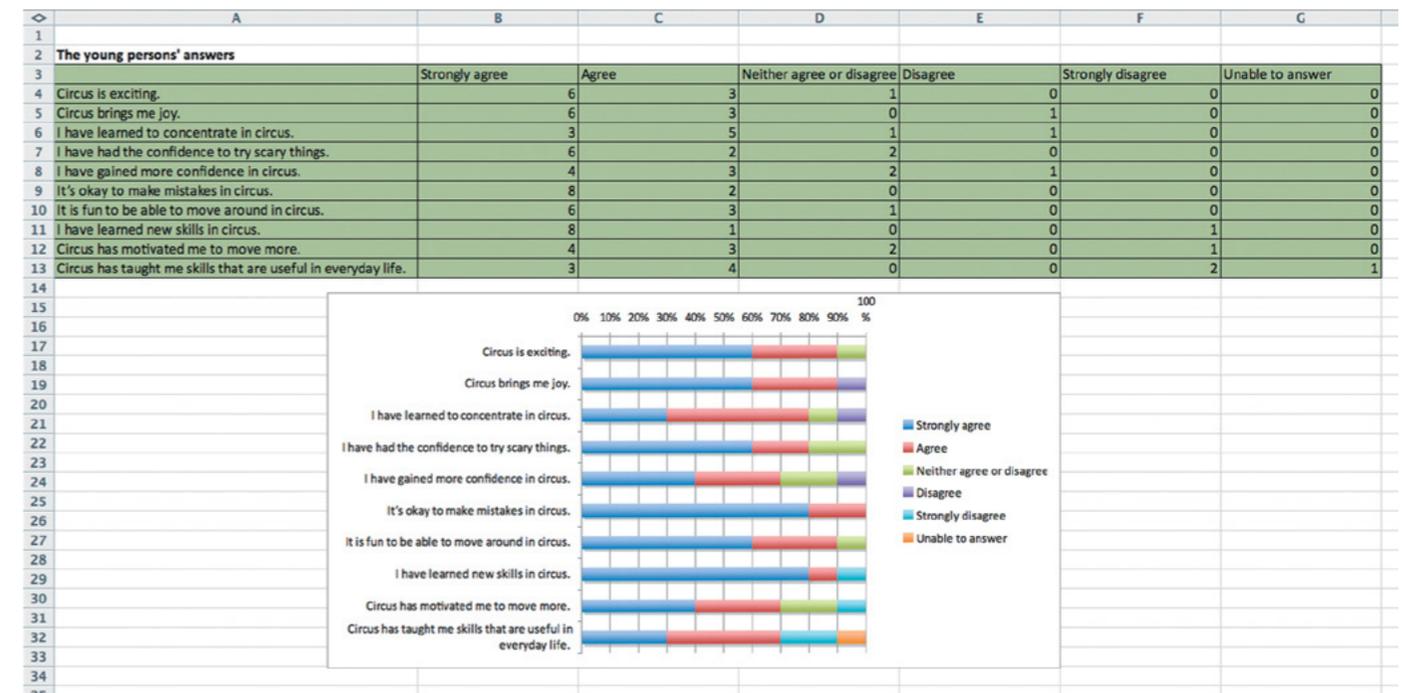


Figure 1. Excel table and chart based on the results elicited from a battery of questions.

How to create an Excel table and chart

You can use the number of responses received for each of the survey questions to draw an Excel table, such as the one depicted in figure 1 (with blue background). Fill column B4 with the number of those respondents who “strongly agreed” with the first statement “Circus is exciting”. Enter the number of those who “agree” in the next column, and so on, working through all the questions in this manner. The chart is ready when you have counted and written down the number of all the answers in all the survey forms.

When you are done, select the chart area by “highlighting” it with the mouse, choose “chart wizard” in the Excel toolbar, click on the bar chart image and choose the stacked bar chart. This is how you can create the image depicted above. You can arrange the statements in the same order as in the above picture by double clicking the mouse on the left side of the bar chart and checking the box “categories in reverse order” on the “scale” tab.

You can process the other multiple-choice questions in the survey into similar tables and charts. You can copy the charts to, for example, Microsoft Word in the following manner: Right-click the mouse on the image and choose the copy command from the Edit menu. Then open the Word file, click on the page and choose the Paste command in the Edit menu.

You can use excel and other spreadsheets to edit the diagrams further in whatever way you like. For example, you can change the colour and width of the bars. Light shades of green or blue are good for positive answers; darker reds and violets are suitable for negatives. You can also rearrange the questions in the chart from top to bottom depending, for example, on the number of positive answers. In this way, you’ll make the image clearer and easier to read.

Appendix 5: Applications for Permission to Conduct Research

Research permit application to be signed by the parents

| PERMISSION TO TAKE PART IN AN INTERVIEW AND TO USE THE DATA TO RESEARCH THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL CIRCUS |
|--|
| Dear circus participant! |
| We are conducting a study of the effects of social circus, and our intention is to carry out interviews with the different interest groups of the circus activities. We would like to know what, in your experience, have been the effects of the circus activity on the wellbeing of your family. The names of the interview participants will be known only by the interviewer, and all conversations will be kept strictly confidential. The interview will be conducted by your own circus instructor. The information we receive will be used only in the research of the effects of social circus. |
| The research coordinators: |
| (name, phone number) |
| Thank you for your participation in advance! |
| The permission to interview and participate in the study |
| Name of the participant _____ |
| Date _____ |
| Parent’s signature _____ |
| Parent’s signature _____ |

General outline of a research application permit for municipalities

Research permit application

date

(contact information of the recipient)

Dear recipient,

(the name of your organization) is applying for a research permit to collect data for a study of the effects of social circus.

The research generates data on the wellbeing effects created by circus. To elicit knowledge on the effects, we gather information from the clients participating in circus; we also turn to their instructors to request their views on the kinds of effects (i.e., physical, psychological and social effects) the activity has had on their clients.

Name of the study: Study of the effects of social circus

Co-ordinator of the study:

Organisation/name/address/phone number/email address

Information will be used: To gather research data to validate the effects of the circus activity

Target group of the study:

1. Group instructors and nursing staff
2. Group participants and their parents

Study method:

- group interviews and individual interviews
- surveys

Timetable:

- (the nearest month for beginning and finishing the study)

Analysing the data and reporting the results: Participants will be interviewed to gather empirical information on the effects of social circus. The data will be analysed in compliance with the data privacy laws, and individual respondents will be unrecognisable in the report.

Data protection, storage and disposal: The study does not require the collection of any classified documents or personal data registries. The surveys and interviews will be processed anonymously. The information will only be used for research purposes.

A short description of the project and the research plan:

The subject matter of the research and its objective:

Applied circus and social circus are used to promote the sense of community and social inclusion as well as the management of daily routines. The target groups for the circus instruction include young

people at risk of marginalisation, immigrants, substance abuse rehabilitants, clients of institutional care, pensioners and the personnel employed in these fields.

The validation of the wellbeing effects allows the circus actors to justify the benefits of applied circus and social circus to the purchaser in the future. Thus, the investigation of the effects might assist circus organisations in marketing their services. The applied and social circus is used to promote the sense of social inclusion and community in addition to the management of daily routines. The target groups for the circus instruction include young people at risk of marginalisation, immigrants, substance abuse rehabilitants, clients of institutional care, pensioners and the personnel employed in these fields. The research produces information on the wellbeing effects created by circus.

Research methods and analysis:

Surveys of the project's target groups will be administered using printed questionnaires handed out to the target groups during a circus session. The circus instructors will be in charge of collecting the answer forms. The survey questionnaires consist of statements and open-ended questions. The questionnaire forms will apply evaluation scales that generate evaluation data and measure the quantitative development.

A survey will allow the examination of the individuals' physical, mental and social developments in the target groups. Data analysis will be used to generate the most central observations and results. The results will be presented through the use of charts.

The target groups for **interviews** will be chosen to represent the variety of different groups (e.g., people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the elderly, mental health rehabilitants and young people in need of special support). The interview questions will be formulated according to the special characteristics of each of the groups, in collaboration with the project personnel.

If the members of a target group are able to relate and evaluate their own experiences, the interviews will be conducted with the participants themselves. In such instances where the members of the target group are unable to participate in interviews, the interviews will be carried out with their parents and instructors.

The interviews will be implemented in part as group interviews and in part as individual interviews. The group interviews will be conducted as follows:

- group interviews with the instructors
- group interviews with the parents
- group interviews with the target groups

The individual interviews will be conducted either face-to-face or over the phone with the target groups and their family members and instructors. The interviews will be transcribed, analysed and presented in a concise form. The interviews will be used as a basis for viewing the wellbeing effects from various perspectives.

The research permit applicant is committed to using the collected data only for the purposes stated in this application and will not disclose or sell the information to a third party.

Signature

Signature of the person who approves of the research permit, name clarification and contact information

THE THIRD SOURCE AND THE EVALUATION OF EFFECTS

Arsi Veikkolainen

Demonstrating effectiveness is a requirement in the modern world

Demonstrating the impact that organisations in the cultural, sport and youth sector have on the wellbeing services is one of the central objectives of the activity in the ESF Coordination project, the Third Source. Our thoughts on the evaluation of effectiveness have been showcased in our newly published report, *From interaction to effectiveness, the effects of the wellbeing services—cases and methods* (Vuorovaikutuksesta vaikuttamiseen, hyvinvointipalvelujen vaikuttavuus—caseja ja keinoja). The research was conducted by Mervi Rajahonka at Aalto University's School of Economics Small Business Center. In addition, we previously presented the practices for demonstrating effectiveness in the *Third Source Casebook* whereas the *Handbook* offers useful methods for evaluating effectiveness; both of these are available in Finnish.

The Third Source's new report focuses specifically on the evaluation of the effects. By **evaluating the effects**, we attempt to demonstrate that the intended change has truly taken place. The report begins by explaining the initial situation that is then compared with the end results. By comparing the final and initial situations, we can demonstrate the possible change or effect. **Evaluating the effectiveness** means that the effects are examined from a wider perspective and over a longer period. It shows how the combination of certain activity and environmental factors generates effects.

The report we've created offers the necessary means—especially for the organisations in the cultural, sport and youth sector—to continue on the path of evaluating the effects. The report tries to aid the organisations in making choices that specifically benefit each individual organisation. These choices are connected to setting the objectives, co-operating with the interest groups, identifying methods for collecting data, as well as describing and presenting the effects. The report showcases seven exemplary cases of how the effectiveness is created and how it can be illustrated. Two of the examples are taken from the world of circus: The Sirkus Magenta's circus for the kids from the suburbs and the Cultural Centre Pii Poo's circus for the elderly.

We have also invested in completing the effects evaluation with training. To that end, the report itself, as well as the other materials we offer, functions as an introduction to the issues and getting the effects evaluation off the ground. A project manager in one of the pilot projects of the development programme stated: *"Getting to know new things and getting them started should be done together with someone who is already familiar with it. You don't have to be able to learn and manage everything yourself when it is possible to turn to experts for assistance."*

Central choices and practical implementation

The Third Source's main idea concerning effects evaluation is to achieve a better understanding of what planning for and evaluating the impact can teach you about your own activity—that is, how you can use the impact evaluation as a tool for directing the organisation's service production. This relates to the connection between the effects and the quality of service. This was a con-

scious choice of the perspective on our part; another way to begin might be to start a dialogue with the interest groups about financing—or some other source of external pressure.

Our second choice relates to learning from our own activity (i.e., learning by doing). Effects evaluation basically focuses on having an internal dialogue and ultimately illustrating the findings connected to determining which benefits the organisation produces with its activity and services. That is to say, what positive effects do the organisation's services create in the wellbeing of its customers?

This is a matter of gathering and producing information, not rocket science, as Jukka Lidman from the Social Development Co. Ltd. pointedly stated.

In practice, the effects evaluation proceeds in five stages: 1) planning and setting the objectives; 2) determining the interest groups; 3) determining the data and the indicators; 4) validating, evaluating and monitoring the effects; and 5) reporting.

For its training sessions, the Third Source has created an annual clock of effects evaluation. It is a tool for planting effects evaluation firmly into the daily routines of the organisation. The effects of the annual evaluation schedule make the administrative routines, annual events and practical activities part of the evaluation processes. It sets a schedule for gathering and producing information, validating the effects, determining the objectives and indicators as well as summarising and reporting the results to the people within the organisation as well as the interest groups.

Methods for every mood

The general emphasis on the importance of various methods when conducting an impact evaluation has made the process seem more difficult than it really is. This view also became apparent when the Third Source conducted evaluations at the local level. The organisations pointed out that “knowledge increases sorrow”. However, the organisations that had put some thought into the evaluation methods admitted that using them does lead to a better understanding of the effects in the target groups. Meanwhile, those organisations that hadn't employed any methods at all were the most uncertain, but they recognised their importance.

Furthermore, what was revealed in the evaluation at the local level was that the organisations respond to the challenges of effects evaluation in various ways. One useful approach was to apply only “lightweight” testing for the practices and methods. This “lighter” type of research can be limited to only a part of the activity; for example, you could focus on only one particular service or a certain part of it.

The choice of method is closely connected to the questions why and for whom the evaluation is conducted. Although the focal point of creating the evaluation was directed at the organisa-

tion's own activity, it is also important to collaborate with the interest groups to determine the selection of the most suitable method and the manner of presenting the effects. You could start by considering the purchasers of your services and adjusting your argumentation to suit their preferences.

The Third Source's report presents various methods and helps choose the best ones. The central message relating to this is that each of the methods and indicators has been created for a specific purpose, promoting certain values and assumptions. In other words, they tend to highlight different things. At best, the most suitable method helps to understand and depict the changes as well as their causes and effects. At worst, a complicated method does not satisfactorily manage to shed any kind of light on the most crucial effects.

Plenty of methods are available. The Third Source report offers a plain language presentation of 28 methods divided into seven groups: 1) accounting models, 2) models of reporting social responsibility, 3) models of strategic quality management, 4) models of project activity and self-evaluation, 5) regional economic models, 6) social investment models and 7) evaluation models for the health and social sectors.

The report compares the different models in terms of the target, subject and focus of the evaluation. Furthermore, it presents the benefits and disadvantages of the methods and what kinds of indicators they employ. The comparison chart also illustrates whether the method is complex, whether the results are comparable with the results achieved by other organisations, whether the interest groups are able to participate in the evaluation and what the outcome of the evaluation process is. In addition, the chart presents a collection of links to practical examples and additional information.

Stories as trump cards

Stories might be the most natural—but not necessarily the most utilised—means for demonstrating effectiveness. The secretary general Aaro Harju from the Educational Association and Citizen's Forum SKAF states: “Organisations are full of stories of effectiveness. Why don't these ever end up on paper?” One of the most essential objectives of the report, as well as the training we offer, is to give organisations ideas on how to bring the “impact orientation” to life by using stories.

Stories about effectiveness can furnish the organisations with a competitive edge. The stories highlight the processes responsible for creating the effects. These processes make it possible to acquire knowledge on the operations and procedures essential to producing the desired effects. The stories also help consider the best ways for measuring the various effects.

The stories should be used during the planning stages when determining the objectives, because they illustrate the vision we have of the effects or our activity.



KATJA PIKKARAINEN, OULUN TÄHTISIRKUS

Benefiting us and others

Evaluating effects benefits the organisation in many ways. From the perspective of directing the activity, the emerging benefits are improvements in the quality of service and, similarly, improved effectiveness. From the vantage point of the organisations in the cultural, sport and youth sector, it is essential to promote comprehensive wellbeing that also increases social capital. At best, the clients are able to participate in defining the quality of service and service development.

Another general benefit from effects evaluation is that the purchasers and co-operators can be given more comprehensive accounts of the activity, such as in a situation where we are trying to be successful in a bidding process. We can also think that, in purchases based on social criteria, these organisations are usually strong because of their ideological core values and commitment to the local community. Nonetheless, the organisations must be able to demonstrate that their services have social value as well as have an interest in getting a fair price for the services. In

reverse, evaluation can be used if the organisation faces a demand for producing the services in more cost-effective ways. The organisation can curb these demands by showing that, when the activity is carried out precisely in the described manner, it will create positive effects that produce social value.

A less advertised advantage is the enhancement of the staff's motivation and job satisfaction when the objectives and purpose of the activity are clarified. Letting the activity be directed by effectiveness also signifies enjoyment, ease and excitement of doing things. It is connected to a shared way of working and the inclusion of all the parts and members of the organisation.

Core issues

To summarise, what is most important is determining what and for whom evaluations are produced. The Third Source's core ideas behind effects evaluation is that it allows for the creation of understanding how the planning and evaluation of the effects promote learning based on the organisation's own activity.

The evaluation is in itself a learning process. In terms of learning, it is good to start by creating limits and finding simple methods. In the end, it is remarkably more important to be able to understand the creation of effects in your own activity than to choose complicated evaluation methods and tools.

The Third Source coordinates the National European Social Fund Programme "The Third Sector Art & Culture, Youth and Sport Organisations Providing Wellbeing Services" (2007–2013). The Third Source supports, educates and produces information while encouraging organisations in the cultural, sport and youth sector to produce local services in co-operation with municipalities or businesses.

The Third Source publications are available in Finnish at: <http://www.kolmaslahde.fi/tietoa>

- *Kolmannella lähteellä - Hyvinvointipalveluja kulttuurin, liikunnan ja nuorisotyön aloilta* (2010)
- *Yhdistykset palvelemassa yhteiskuntaa - ja toteuttamassa itseään (Casebook)* (2012)
- *Yhdistykset toteuttamassa itseään - ja palvelemassa yhteiskuntaa (Handbook)* (2013)
- *Vuorovaikutuksessa vaikuttamiseen. Hyvinvointipalveluiden vaikuttavuus - caseja ja keinoja.* (2013)

ANTTI YRJÖNEN

EFFECTIVE CIRCUS PROJECT 2011 – 2014

The Effective Circus was an ESF (European Social Fund) project run by the Centre for Practise as Research in Theatre at the University of Tampere. It was funded by the Lapland Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment and the participating circuses and municipalities.

The aim of the project was to increase employment in the circus sector by improving the circus organisations' prospects for employing professionals in the field of applied circus and social circus. The project supervised the organisation of circus teaching in different parts of Finland; increased dialogue between the participating circuses and municipalities; organised working seminars, and improved the marketing of wellbeing services. The project also involved in the development methods for researching the wellbeing effects of circus.



From left Katri Kekäläinen, Noora Honkanen, Piia Karkkola, Sofia-Charlotta Kakko





Effective Circus Project

vaikuttavasirkus.fi

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