

Navigating art in participatory settings – issues for artists and employers

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Navigating art in participatory settings: Summary

Philippa Johnstone

April 2013

1. Introduction

This paper provides a summary of the key learning from the four Artists Labs run by the Navigator pathfinder as part of ArtWorks between August 2012 and January 2013. These in-depth conversations with, and between, artists and employers/commissioners of artists working in participatory settings were carried out through face-to-face roundtable discussions and workshops, expert questioning by email and an online survey, using a range of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.

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‘ArtWorks: Developing Practice in Participatory Settings’ is a Paul Hamlyn Foundation Special Initiative to support the continuing professional development of artists working in participatory settings. It has support and funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Creativity Culture & Education (supported by Arts Council England) and the Cultural Leadership Programme. www.artworksphf.org.uk Navigator is one of five pathfinders funded to deliver ArtWorks. It comprises five national strategic organizations A+ (a partnership comprising a-n The Artists Information Company and Artquest), Engage, Foundation for Community Dance, NAWE and Sound Sense.



2. Focus of the Artists Labs

In the Labs, we explored two specific gaps in our knowledge about participatory practice:

(i) The demand side: How can employers and commissioners* of artists ensure they are hiring 'quality'? What professional development might result in better hiring?

To answer these questions, Sound Sense conducted two rounds of expert questioning by email using the Delphi technique with experienced employers of community musicians between August and December 2012, asking them: Can you get the quality of community musicians you want: if so, how do you do this? E.g. by recommendation, by qualification, by training them yourself; if not, what professional development would be required to get you what you want? The findings are based on 23 responses received in the first round and nine responses in the second. The organisations in the sample reflected a range of intents and purpose of work from those where the focus was on the music itself through to those prioritising personal, social or community development, with the music as a vehicle to deliver this.

A+ and engage joined forces to hold two roundtable discussions in September 2012, one with visual artists who work on arts projects with people, and the other with the employers/commissioners of such artists (a total of 20 people), to explore how artists and employers/commissioners of artists might better partner on visual arts projects with people. The insights from these informed an online survey conducted in December 2012 and January 2013 which attracted a total of 972 responses from visual artists, employers/commissioners of artists and 'artist commissioners'.

*By this term we also mean hirers and partners etc.

(ii) Practice differences: Participatory work revolves around the axes of art form; values; intents and purposes; and settings (aka client group or contexts). Are there sufficient commonalities between these axes to allow for common training, qualifications and standards or do we need to construct different pathways?

The Foundation for Community Dance explored this topic by holding a two-day workshop with eight participatory artists drawn from across

four disciplines (dance, music, visual arts and writing), looking at the commonalities and differences between the initial training and continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities in the different art forms.

NAWE focused on the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to work with people with dementia, holding two two-day roundtables in October 2012 and November 2012, the first with seven experienced writers working in the field and the second with ten leading practitioners in dance, drama, music and the visual/applied arts, to explore the commonalities and differences in methodology etc. between writers and those working in other art forms, and the implications for training, qualifications and standards. A briefing paper was circulated to participants, based on a short survey of arts and dementia activity and research in the UK undertaken by leading arts and dementia writer John Killick.

The four Artists Labs resulted in a wealth of rich material that we can use to help us to advocate to employers and commissioners to help improve the quality of the work of artists they employ and to gain a clearer sense of whether training, qualifications and standards can be made general or must be created specifically. The Labs also pointed to a number of areas of further research, some of which we aim to address in Phase 3.

The four individual research reports can be found at this end of this document.

3. Findings in common from the four Artists Labs

A number of findings were found in common from all four Artists Labs including:

- (i) **The perceived need for advocacy for participatory practice – to raise the profile within the cultural and other sectors, promote greater understanding of its diversity and the nature/value of the work, attract more young people with the right skills and qualities to the field etc.**
- (ii) **The need to ‘educate’ the employer and commissioner – both the experienced (encourage them to be ambitious etc.) and those who are new/inexperienced/reluctant.**

- (iii) The skills, knowledge and understanding etc. needed to work effectively as an artist within participatory settings are the same across art forms, setting etc. – the language used to define them may vary and how they are grouped but they are fundamentally the same. The one absolutely core skill is the ability as an artist to understand how you work and to be able to understand the context so you can adapt it accordingly e.g. a mix of self-awareness, reflective practice and facilitation/groupwork skills.
- (iv) The majority of artists and employers/commissioners like to learn by doing on the job so they are looking for opportunities for situated learning (shadowing, assisting, placements, internships etc.) and peer learning (networking, mentoring, co-mentoring).
- (v) Artists and employers both recognise the value of reflective practice but it can be hard to find the time for it and if you're an artist, difficult to evidence it.

4. Key findings from the Artists Labs

The demand side: Hiring quality/Improving the quality of hiring

- * **Quality:** As far as the employers of community musicians are concerned, there is no single definition of 'quality' – this depends on the intent of the work. If the focus is on the music itself, organisations look first and foremost for art form excellence. For development organisations, their priority is more on excellent people skills.
- * In the A+ and engage Lab, quality refers as much to the artist's ability to explain their work accessibly and the process as to the quality of the art itself. Artists, and their employers/commissioners, need to agree how to define and measure 'what is good'.
- * **Skillset:** Whatever the intent and purpose of the work, employers of community musicians are looking for a skillset comprising art form, contextual and personal skills (the latter representing the hardest to find). They get quality by being clear about what skills they are looking for and being able to identify these through 'observation in practice'. They also rely heavily on their 'little

black book' and personal recommendations from peers. Engaging someone on a trial period in a shadowing or assisting role is common practice.

- * Visual artists, and their employers/commissioners, share similar views as to the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to be able to work together effectively. Both groups believe that having the ability to communicate and collaborate with a wide range of people underpins all successful participatory arts projects. Mutual understanding and respect is key. Both groups are looking for an understanding of the aims of the project, each other's roles and expectations, and their work/practice. The artist is especially looking to the employer for an understanding of the power of art to challenge and subvert, while the employer is looking to the artist for an understanding of the participant/setting.
- * Employers/commissioners expect artists to have excellent people skills and look to themselves to have strong project management skills. Both groups value flexibility. The artist is looking for the employer to be flexible around project outcomes while the employer is looking to the artist to have the flexibility and facilitation skills to be able to adapt their approach to the needs of the participants and setting.
- * **Training/CPD:** Many employers of community musicians rely on their own in-house training which is specific to the project/client group/issue etc. as the means to assure quality. While there is a perceived gap in external training related to a particular setting or intent, there is also a recognition that core skills and qualities are transferable between contexts which suggests that encouraging and supporting community musicians to experience a wide range of settings and develop appropriate approaches for working in each might be more effective than extending the range of training provision.
- * **Qualifications:** Within community music, the part that qualifications play in hiring decisions varies according to the intent of the work – for those organisations where music comes first, a music degree and some kind of teaching qualification (plus plenty of experience) are expected. Generally, however, music

qualifications are considered to be too heavy on the theory side to be useful although they can be helpful to the new employer and act as a useful indicator of commitment.

- * Higher Education is seen by visual artists and employers/commissioners as having a role to play in preparing artists to work in the field. They suggest that visual arts degrees (under and post graduate) include a module on the topic, with the opportunity to gain practical experience. Both groups value peer learning highly. There is some suggestion that artists are looking to be empowered to lead their own participatory arts projects rather than 'invariably' being engaged/managed by others.
- * **The reflective practitioner:** The community musician who is 'constantly reflecting and learning through their work' is much valued by employers and there is a perceived need for more reflective practice training. Visual artists and employers/commissioners also welcome opportunities to reflect, suggesting that formal artist-to-artist and manager-to-artist-to-manager review processes should be built into projects.
- * **Advocacy:** For visual artists and employers/commissioners, a key factor in improving quality is increasing understanding about what the arts and artists can offer and how the role of the artist differs from others working in the community, especially within non-arts sectors. There is also a need to raise the profile and status of participatory practice within the cultural sector so more emerging artists are encouraged to enter the field and it's less prey to the vagaries of the political and economic climate.

**Artists' Lab Report:
A+ (a-n and Artquest) and
engage**

Esther Salamon

April 2013

1. Introduction – the proposition

During summer 2012, A+ (a collaboration between a-n The Artists Information Company and Artquest), and engage devised a proposition from which to explore the professional needs of those artists who work in socially engaged practice and participatory settings and their hirers/commissioners.

1.1 The proposition stated that – Visual artists working in socially engaged practices are often invited to work in participatory settings. Socially engaged practice – with a focus on longer-term collaborative community engagement, building sustained relationships and working with participants for artistic ends – is often erroneously conflated with work in participatory settings, where an educational outcome or social improvement of some kind is expected.

1.2 Socially engaged artists hired to work in participatory settings may understand their employment as a commission for a new piece of work or a participatory production; conversely, the employer may be expecting a project that addresses participants' specific social, psychological or educational development. Although these working practices can be complimentary, a clearer understanding between artists and hirers is vital in avoiding / minimising poor working relationships that could reduce employment prospects for practitioners in the future, as well as ensuring a high-quality experience for participants.

1.3 The line between socially engaged practice and working in participatory settings is often not well understood by artists or the wider sector in which they are employed. On the one hand, this could be due to a lack of dedicated/bespoke continuous professional development (CPD) provision and learning resources that are available on university courses and in other settings. On the other hand, hirers/commissioners of visual artists could lack sufficient understanding of the breadth of contemporary visual arts practice and artists' motivations.

2. Methodology – two round table discussions and an online survey

In order to improve practice and training in participatory arts in future, two round table discussions and an online survey were devised and widely disseminated by a-n The Artists Information Company, Artquest and engage.

2.1 The round table discussions were held in London on the 20th and 21st September 2012. These sessions explored the research question:

“What professional development – in HE and with practising artists and employers/commissioners – would be required to effect a greater level of understanding of expectations and of good working practices for artists working in participatory settings?”

And four sub-questions:

- (i) **“What are the expectations / ambitions of artists working in socially engaged practice and employers of artists working in participatory settings?”**
- (ii) **“How can artists and hirers better understand each other’s practices and project aims?”**
- (iii) **“What conditions / materials would enable artists and hirers work more collaboratively to ensure both social engagement and participatory agendas are fulfilled?”**
- (iv) **“What HE courses or CPD could better prepare artists to work in this sphere?”**

Through a highly-participative exploration of seven questions.

2.2 A distillation of the twenty participants’ and three organisers’ observations, insights and recommendations were produced in a report in September 2012.

2.3 In order to gain a deeper understanding of how artists and employers of artists might better partner on visual arts projects with people, A+ and engage decided to create a questionnaire and electronically, via Survey Monkey, disseminate it widely during December 2012 and January 2013. The survey’s twelve questions were informed by the insights proposed during the round table discussions (please see Appendix 1 for the survey questions). Responses to the survey (972 in total) were received from visual artists, employers/hirers of visual artists and those who were both practising artists and employers/commissioners of artists (titled ‘artist commissioners’ for the purpose of this report). Completed surveys were received from across the U.K., internationally and from people working across sectors/contexts (please see Appendix 2 for demographic details).

2.4 Although a substantial number of people completed the survey, it is worth noting that many expressed frustration with it for three key reasons:

- (i) **As a significant proportion of respondents were working in the participatory/ socially engaged practice sector for at least 5 to 10 years – 40% of employers, just over 29% of artist commissioners and over 25% of artists – they felt several of the questions were unsuitable for both the experienced artist and the experienced employer/hirer/commissioner.**
- (ii) **Several respondents believed the questions were phrased in such a way that assumed there were problems/challenges that needed to be addressed, without being given much opportunity to share examples of best practice.**
- (iii) **Many respondents would have preferred questions which drew on their broad knowledge and experience, as opposed to being forced to reflect on a specific/ most recent project¹.**

1 The questionnaire asked respondents to “consider the last visual arts project that you were involved with which involved an artist working with people.”

2.5 Be that as it may, the results of the survey are highly informative and insightful and provide a useful snapshot (for it is only a snapshot) of views.

2.6 This report has sought to address the original key research question:

“What professional development – in HE and with practising artists and employers/commissioners – would be required to effect a greater level of understanding of expectations and of good working practices for artists working in participatory settings?”

2.7 I have tried to consolidate the oft repeated points by distilling the key views and observations that were made by the survey's 972 respondents and the twenty round table's participants. This report is the result of analysing several hundreds of opinions and grouping these under three broad headings (with associated sub-headings):

- (i) **'What to learn',**
- (ii) **'How to learn',**
- (iii) **'Reflections on the training/education needs of the inexperienced employer/hirer'.**

For those who are interested in more detailed information/data please refer to Appendix 3.

2.8 Please note: the terms 'hirers', 'employers' and 'commissioners' are used interchangeably.

3. The results

What to learn

3.1 Communication, Partnerships and Collaborations: Being able to communicate, negotiate and collaborate effectively with a wide range of people underpins all successful participatory arts projects. It is worth noting that 85% of employers, 81.61% of artist commissioners and 80.57% of artists believed that having regular meetings which involved the artist, the commissioner and relevant others (e.g. funders, participants) for the duration of a project served to strengthen partnership working, went some way towards:

- (i) **minimising misunderstandings,**
- (ii) **fostering mutual understanding,**
- (iii) **ensuring that a project was progressing to everyone's satisfaction.**

3.2 Regular and open communication developed trusting relationships between the partners and ensured their continued commitment to the project.

3.3 So as not to alienate their partners, participants of the round table discussions believed that practitioners needed to learn:

- (i) **how groups, and the individuals within them, work (psychologically, sociologically, etc.),**

- (ii) **how to effectively describe their practice, contemporary arts practice and socially engaged and participatory arts practice in ways that were accessible and understandable to those not directly involved with the arts sector.**

3.4 Facilitation and people skills: Perhaps not surprisingly, employers and artist commissioners strongly felt there was a need for artists to have a sophisticated level of facilitation and, what I've called 'people skills'. Employers, who are responsible for the people in their care, expect artists (and others) to act sensitively, empathetically, sympathetically and professionally. On the one hand, they expect them to be able to build effective relationships with participants and, on the other, be able to engage them in the project by being charismatic, enthusiastic, energetic and passionate. One employer's comment represents the view of several –

“...the artist did not have very good communication skills when dealing with people (although they were very good at one way presentations) and so the participatory aspect of the project was only successful because of other individuals making connections and smoothing of the bridges burned by the artist. The artist was naive about how to approach and pursue working with local residents and expected large numbers of participants to be ‘delivered on a plate’ to fulfil the project that they had designed (which was theoretically and critically well thought out). On the one hand, commissioners cannot expect artists to be social/community workers but on the other hand, if artists are promoting their practice as being genuinely participatory then they should have the skills to be able to follow this through.”

3.5 Employers also expect artists to be flexible, able to adapt their facilitation skills to participants' abilities and interests, whilst being cognisant of the fact that participants often lead difficult and complex lives. Interestingly, 82.08% of artists 81.67% of employers and 71.76% of artist commissioners believed that their projects would have benefited from a better understanding of participants' needs.

3.6 Several artists from the round table discussions and the survey believed that a balance needed to be found between “excellence in art” and excellence at communicating/facilitating, believing that an artist's work could be exceptionally good, but their facilitation, communication and project management skills could be weak.

3.7 Of the respondents to the survey, 70.31% of employers, 69.15% of artist commissioners and 62.35% of artists believed that their most recent project would have benefited from training in facilitation, project management, managing difficult situations, safeguarding, negotiation and communicating effectively. However, in answer to a different question in the survey, only 51.61% of employers and 55.17% of artist commissioners thought short courses/training in working with people would have been the best way forward, while 63.83% of artists thought this would have helped them in their most recent project.

3.8 Evaluating participatory arts practice: Several participants of the round table discussions and a high proportion of the respondents to the survey – 84.53% of artist commissioners, 84.38% of employers and 70.57% of artists – believed that independent evaluators should be engaged to critique projects and be asked to consider improvements to future ones.

3.9 Capturing and sharing learning through evaluating oneself (self-assessment) is another key consideration which is worthy of investigation. Of particular interest is considering how one might share any insights/learning that has been unexpectedly acquired once a project's ended, i.e. sharing unanticipated/inadvertent learning with others. By way of illustration, three respondents of the survey are quoted here –

“I had expected a specific, conclusive end result, meaning that I was initially disappointed but subsequently realised I learned more than expected”

“...discovered good ways of making things with blind and partially sighted people ONLY AFTER I had completed the project.”

“...but my personal practice has grown and developed in ways I had not foreseen.”

3.10 Finally, participants of the round table discussions, along with several respondents to the survey, believed that new ways of evaluating and measuring participatory arts practice and projects – for example, developing appropriate measures of success, definitions of quality and excellence – needed to be found.

3.11 Project development and management: A substantial number of respondents to the survey – 82.42% of artist commissioners, 81.20% of artists and 80.96% of employers – and participants of the round table discussions believed that partners involved in participatory arts project needed to agree several key issues as early as possible in the planning process, including:

i) **Who**

- * will be involved,
- * will manage the project and who will the artist be accountable to,
- * will lead the work – the artist, the participant or the organisation/employer – 78.16% of artist commissioners, 67.92% of artists and 67.19% of employers believed this to be a particularly important consideration which needed to be agreed prior to the project starting,
- * will support the artist and the participants for the duration of the project,
- * will own the final product, if there is one.

(ii) **What**

- * values are common to all of the partners,
- * 'success' looks like. There was felt to be a strong need to be realistic about the outcomes of projects,

- * the aims and objectives of the project are,
- * the benchmarks are,
- * resources are available,
- * the artist's brief and person specification will include,
- * legal requirements, e.g. safeguarding, insurances, etc are needed,
- * the risks are and how they will be managed,
- * the participants, partners/stakeholders want and need.

(iii) **Why**

- * the project is being developed. What does the employer want and need, and why is a practicing artist being engaged (what do they bring to the table that is different to that of a social worker, youth worker or teacher)?
- * is the artist interested in this area of work? An artist commissioner commented that "It is important for the artist to examine their own values and motivation before embarking on a participatory project."

(iv) **When**

(v) **Where**

(vi) **How – it will be managed. The partners will need to agree:**

- * How difficulties/challenges will be dealt with,
- * The budget and other resources/materials, and who is providing these,
- * The support framework and structure for the artist (and others as appropriate),
- * How and what will be evaluated; and how the project will be monitored to ensure that all of the partners' needs are being met,
- * How often the partners will meet – 84.37% of employers, 81.52% of artist commissioners and 78.09% of artists believed regular meetings were important,
- * How the artist will be inducted (to aid understanding of the partner organisation, their expectations, the participants' needs and capabilities, etc) – 78.46% of employers, 72.91% of artist commissioners and 63.73% of artists believed that understanding these issues were an important component of successful participatory arts projects.

(vii) **How much** – the budget needs to match the ambition of the project, be costed realistically and be raised before the project begins. Consideration needs to be given to a contingency, a 'Plan B' if, for example, all of the funds aren't raised. It was noted that agreement would need to be reached on any possible modification to the budget, including those cost centres which were not open to negotiation, e.g. rates of pay.

(viii) Acknowledging/embedding notions of flexibility and experimentation and, on occasion, taking calculated risks – 83.16% of artist commissioners, 76.20% of artists and 75.38% of employers believed these to be important considerations that would benefit projects. Two quotes illustrate these views:

- * **An artist respondent reflected that – “...though the project changed and evolved both myself and the organisation were flexible and worked together for a positive successful outcome.”**
- * **An artist commissioner acknowledged that – “Expectations always change and alter throughout a project.”**

3.12 It was also noted by respondents and participants in the round table discussions that each project was unique and, as such, needed to be developed individually/bespoke, i.e. developed setting by setting, and should not be formulaic or seek to replicate processes from other contexts or settings.

How to learn

3.13 When reading this section, it is worth noting the points made in paragraph 2.4, i.e. that:

- (i) **Most of the survey’s respondents and participants of the two round table discussions were highly experienced in participatory/socially engaged arts projects**
- (ii) **The survey asked respondents to reflect on their most recent project**

3.14 General point on developing artists’ self-determination – Several artists believed that courses, mentors, training schemes, etc. should, at their core, enable artists to develop, manage and deliver their own participatory arts projects, as opposed to “invariably” being engaged/managed by others.

3.15 Modules and degrees: A relatively low number of respondents – 62.70% of artists, 55.69% of artist commissioners and 54.23% of employers – believed that a module or an undergraduate or post-graduate degree on socially engaged/participatory arts practice would have been helpful to them.

3.16 Although not highlighted by respondents to the survey, participants of the round table discussions believed that supervised field placements, which were part of a training/education programme, would benefit the sector. It was thought that these placements would:

- (i) **provide students with the opportunity to shadow experienced artists working in participatory/socially engaged contexts,**
- (ii) **equip them with valuable practical experience, and in this way enable them to put theory into practice,**
- (iii) **expose them to new networks.**

3.17 Apprenticeships: It is worth noting that, although the participants of the round table discussions advocated for the development of apprenticeship schemes, a significant number of respondents to the survey questioned their effectiveness. When asked "What would have helped you carry out your role more effectively during the project?", 50% of artist commissioners, 52.60% of artists, 63.79% of employers, and thought apprenticeships would have been unhelpful.

3.18 Peer networks: Conversely, most of the respondents – 89% of artist commissioners, 84.22% of artists and 83.61% of employers – believed that being part of a supported network of peers was one of the most valuable vehicles for learning.

3.19 Participants of the round table discussions believed that developing a framework of peer-to-peer/artist-to-artist review processes – which was built on trust, openness and confidentiality – would be extremely valuable as it would provide:

- (i) **Time for reflection**
- (ii) **An opportunity to mutually observe and review performance**
- (iii) **A joint mentoring/support opportunity**
- (iv) **A valuable opportunity to develop one's practice**

3.20 Reviewing and reflecting: Participants of the round table discussions believed that developing manager-to-artist-to-manager review processes – which was built on trust, openness and confidentiality – would, similarly, benefit all parties as it would:

- (i) **Improve and enhance practice and mutual understanding**
- (ii) **Provide time for reflection**
- (iii) **Be an effective vehicle to review performance**
- (iv) **Be a valuable opportunity to develop both individual's practice**

3.21 Also note paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9 on evaluation and assessment.

3.22 Mentoring: Many participants of the round table discussions strongly believed that being mentored by experienced artists and/or experienced employers would benefit artists/employers working on participatory projects. However, when asked whether being mentored by an experienced artist would have helped them, 69.25% of artists, 63.21% of artist commissioners and 52.45% of employers thought that it would have. Whilst being mentored by an experienced employer resulted in 70.96% of employers, 69.32% of artist commissioners and 60.39% of artists believing this would have helped.

3.23 Also note paragraph 3.16 on undertaking placements in the field.

3.24 Self-directed learning: Many respondents to the survey thought that self-directed, and supported, learning through tailored and accessible resources would have helped them carry out their role more effectively – 69% of artist commissioners, 64.13% of artists

and nearly 60% of employers believing this to be so. The participants of the round table discussions believed that access to informative material, resources, books (both historical and contemporary) should be made readily available and easily accessible.

Reflections on the training/education needs of the inexperienced employer/hirer/commissioner

3.25 Many artists and artist commissioners of the survey and participants of the round table discussions believed that projects would be more successful if inexperienced employers/hirers, from non-arts sectors in particular, understood and valued artists' and arts' role and impact on the people in their care, communities and society. A selection of different artists' views included:

“The people who contracted me didn’t understand the process or nature of working with freelance artists so neither side’s expectations were met.”

“The expedition had no expectation of the artist or even seemed to want the artist – as though the artist had no value or anything to offer.”

“Training should be led by artists...we should be given the chance to tell commissioning organisations how we work with people.”

3.26 Importantly, several artists in the survey and round table discussions noted that those working in the non-arts sectors needed:

- (i) **an understanding of the vital role the arts and artists played in society/their organisation**
- (ii) **guidance/training on good practice (for example, several respondents mentioned the need for rates of pay to be commensurate with the demands of the contract and the practitioner’s experience)**
- (iii) **to understand and distinguish between the different aims and practices of participatory artists and that of social workers, teachers, youth workers, etc.**
- (iv) **their “conduct/behaviour scrutinised because [this work] involved participants.”**

3.27 And three artist commissioners commented:

“I had little or no support from the joint commissioners. All contact with participants was organised by me, led by me, conceived by me...the commissioners behaved as though the outcome was their property without any regard for me as maker / producer / enabler...commissioners took possession of the work and communication was very poor.”

“The lead staff were very inexperienced in participatory arts and as such the project could have been better organised – this led to interim project leaders being confused as to what was required.”

The project “suffered from inexperienced commissioning body.”

3.28 Unsurprisingly, perhaps, it was felt that employers needed to have a good understanding of the artist's role within an organisation/a project with 85% of employers, 81.61% of artist commissioners and 80.57% of artists believing this was a critical element in the execution of successful projects.

4. General conclusions and recommendations

Although participants of the round table discussions and respondents to the survey believed that training and support was needed in order to develop and sustain good practice, several points need to be noted before Higher Education (H.E.) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes are considered.

4.1 Value: Although there are many studies which address the value of the arts on people, the economy, communities and society, it is important to continue referencing the research that is available. So although it is important to identify the professional development needs of those working in, or wishing to work in, the participatory/socially engaged arts sector, it is also worth re-emphasising the wider value and benefits of working in this sector.

4.2 When asked to identify the most important outcomes of their participatory art project, 100% of employers, 96.52% of artist commissioners and 93.53% of artists identified the quality of participants' artistic exposure/arts experience. Also high on the list of important outcomes was the positive impact of projects on participants' social, psychological and educational experience with 92.04% of employers, 91.30% of artist commissioners and 87.92% of artists believing this to be so. Employers who were involved in the round table discussions concurred, expecting arts project to make a positive impact on participants' self-confidence and wellbeing, increase their social contacts and skills base.

4.3 Impact of the recession: Many respondents noted the current recession's grip on universities and the public and voluntary sectors (who are substantial commissioners of artists), and the inextricable link on artists' and employer's practice and livelihoods and, by definition, on communities.

4.4 A sad story, all too often repeated, is this one from an artist commissioner – "...due to unexpected funding pressures brought about by a changing economy, and a number of organisational challenges, the exit strategy for the project did not meet expectations as much as it might have done."

4.5 And these artists' observations:

Due to tighter budgets, expectations were a lot higher and organisations were demanding "more for less"

"...there is a tendency towards expectation 'creep', with more requirements/ expectations building as projects progress. In itself this is not an issue but there are rarely further funds/resources/time to address these expectations, which means artists end up doing more for less."

"...funding has been substantially cut in community arts...the pay is substantially reduced...hourly rates been reduced, but preparation time and post production are usually completely unpaid. Commissioners are expecting a lot more from the contact time – including more people, having very polished product – all of which require more unpaid prep work. Things like induction, meetings and training are most often unpaid for."

4.6 Legacies and sustainability: Several respondents to the survey believed that artists and employers needed to consider how best to sustain arts activities in settings/contexts once projects finished, thus ensuring creativity continued to make a positive impact on participants (as opposed to periodically 'parachuting' artists in).

4.7 Raising the profile/status: In order to establish participatory arts as a vital and valuable arts practice in the minds of politicians, policy makers and the arts establishment several respondents to the survey and participants of the round table discussions believed its profile was in desperate need of raising. An artist commissioner's view that "participatory arts are not publicised enough therefore the public do not recognise what activities are" was echoed by many. Another artist commissioner thought projects should be shared and written about which would raise "...the national public profile... would solidify their achievements" and would add value.

4.8 If the profile was raised 'loudly' and successfully respondents and participants believed it would:

- (i) **attract artists to the sector**
- (ii) **build a ground swell of support from the general public who, in turn, could influence politicians, policy makers and the media**

4.9 With these points in mind, consideration should be given to identifying 'non-arts champions' – i.e. those individuals, organisations and the national and local media who understand participatory arts' impact on people and society – who would be willing to collaborate with those from the arts sector on a media strategy. Their task would be to agree a robust strategy and tactics which would serve to raise the profile of this often neglected area of work.

4.10 Training and education for artists: Several respondents to the survey believed that striking a balance between learning through practical experience and learning through formalised education/training needed to be found. The reasons for these views were echoed by several artists and artist commissioners, including:

“Professionalising the role through taught modules, etc. is a sure way to ossify particular patterns of working.”

“I have extensive experience... I would resent a situation where qualifications become a requirement.”

“Student artists do not appear to graduate from art institutions with the tools they need to make a decent living from their art: only teaching concept development isn't enough”

4.11 Participants of the round table discussions believed projects needed to be organised setting-by-setting and context-by-context and not be organised to a pre-determined/learned formula.

4.12 A summary of artists' key training and education needs include:

- (i) **Facilitation and people skills**
- (ii) **Project development and management skills**
- (iii) **Communication skills**
- (iv) **Collaborative and partnership working**

4.13 Due to the economic challenges identified earlier, perhaps it is unrealistic to expect new and bespoke modules or new undergraduate/postgraduate degrees in participatory arts to be developed. It might be more achievable and productive to capitalise on the knowledge and resources already available, by developing national/regional/local partnerships of education, training and support providers who are willing to negotiate and share the development and delivery of training, education and support through collective (and mature) negotiation and collaboration.

4.14 Training and education for the non-arts sector: The onus of successful participatory arts projects is not the sole responsibility of artists or arts organisations. There could be a key role for ArtWorks and its partners to address the training, education and support needs of those working in the non-arts sectors. They could also play a key role in lobbying and educating/informing politicians and policy makers on the value of this work. In these ways participatory arts projects could have a greater chance of succeeding and reaching their aspirations.

4.15 A summary of the non-arts sector's training and education needs include:

- (i) **Understanding the role and impact of art and artists on people, communities and society**
- (ii) **Valuing the role and function of art and artists on society**

4.16 Final point: Although the methodology used in this study had some weaknesses, they do not detract from the valuable information which has been provided by a cross section of professionals. The large number of people, 972 in total – from across the U.K., internationally and from across sectors, settings and contexts – who completed the survey is striking. Their thoughtfulness and carefully considered contributions, along with those of the participants of the round table discussions, suggest that this area of work is critically important, engenders strong and passionate views and is absolutely worthy of development.

Appendix 1: Survey Questions

About this survey

Navigator is a project working with artists, employers of artists, government, higher education institutions and training providers to devise and deliver support and give a collective voice to participatory artists.

As part of these initiatives a-n, Artquest and engage are undertaking consultation with artists and the employers of artists involved in visual arts projects with people.

This survey will provide rich evidence to support Navigator's research into improving practices and training in participatory arts in future.

There are 11 questions in the survey, and although we know you're busy, we hope you'll give up 15 minutes of your time to ensure the survey data is genuinely representative.

Although you may not be able to comment on all of the questions or points, we would be very grateful if you could find the time to answer as many as possible.

The survey will close on 14 January 2013. Thank you in advance for your help.

'ArtWorks: Developing Practice in Participatory Settings' supports the continuing professional development of artists, across artforms/disciplines, who work in participatory settings (www.artworksphf.org.uk). 'Navigator' is part of the ArtWorks initiative and is being delivered by the Foundation for Community Dance, engage, A+ (a partnership between a-n The Artists Information Company and Artquest), the National Association of Writers in Education and Sound Sense. ArtWorks is a Paul Hamlyn Foundation Special Initiative with support and funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Creativity Culture & Education (supported by Arts Council England) and the Cultural Leadership Programme.

About you

*1. Are you:

- a visual artist
- an employer/commissioner of visual artists
- both

Additional comments

About you

2. How many years have you been involved in participatory/socially engaged arts practice?

- less than one year
- 1 - 4 years
- 5 - 10 years
- 11 - 19 years
- 20+ years

About you

3. Do you work in the arts sector?

- Yes
 No

If no, please say which sector(s) you work in

4. How many years have you been employing/commissioning visual artists to work in your setting(s)?

- less than one year
 1 - 4 years
 5 - 10 years
 11 - 19 years
 20+ years

5. Where are you based?

- East of England
 East Midlands
 London
 North East
 North West
 South East
 South West
 West Midlands
 Yorkshire
 Northern Ireland
 Scotland
 Wales
 International (please specify country of residence)

6. Where did you hear about this survey?

- a-n
 Artquest
 engage
 Other (please specify)

Expectations of visual arts projects with people

Please consider the last visual arts project that you were involved with which involved an artist working with people.

7. When was the project (which year/s)?

- 2012
- 2011
- 2010
- 2009
- 2008
- 2007
- 2006
- 2005
- 2000-2004

Other (please specify)

8. Were expectations met?

- Yes
- No
- Partly

Please explain

Project outcomes

9. How important were the following project outcomes in this most recent experience?

	Very important	Important	Not important	Don't know
Provided an opportunity to promote or support an artist's practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provided an opportunity to promote the commissioner's/employer's organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provided an opportunity to commission a new artwork	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhanced the quality of participants' artistic exposure/arts experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discovered the positive impact that the artist had on participants' social, psychological and/or educational experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To have secured the funding for the project	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Met the objectives of an existing, or new/recent, policy maker or funder	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learned new skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provided an opportunity to work in a new context/setting/environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provided an opportunity to work with a visual artist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify below)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please give details

Improving your experience

You may find it useful to read this question in full before beginning to answer.

10. How would you improve this most recent experience? How important would you consider these improvements to be?

	Very important	Important	Not important	Don't know
An induction period prior to the artist working with participants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional comments	<input type="text"/>			
A better understanding of the collaborating partner's (e.g. artist, commissioner) work/practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional comments	<input type="text"/>			
A better understanding and clarity of the project's aims	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional comments	<input type="text"/>			
To have been involved in the planning of the project	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional comments	<input type="text"/>			
To have been involved with negotiating the terms of the brief	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional comments	<input type="text"/>			
Longer planning time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional comments	<input type="text"/>			
A better understanding of the needs of participants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional comments	<input type="text"/>			
A better understanding of the needs of the visual artist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional comments	<input type="text"/>			
A better understanding of the employer's/commissioner's needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional comments	<input type="text"/>			

<p>Regular communication/meetings between the employer/commissioner and the visual artist</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Additional comments</p> <input type="text"/>				
<p>Greater willingness/flexibility amongst the partners (e.g. the artist, commissioner/employer, funders) to make adjustments to the project, as appropriate</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Additional comments</p> <input type="text"/>				
<p>Clearer management, support and reporting processes, structures/frameworks</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Additional comments</p> <input type="text"/>				
<p>A rigorous/robust evaluation</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Additional comments</p> <input type="text"/>				
<p>More funding in place before project began</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Additional comments</p> <input type="text"/>				
<p>Training in, e.g. facilitation, project management, managing difficult situations, safeguarding, negotiation, communication, etc.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Additional comments</p> <input type="text"/>				
<p>To have agreed ownership of the artwork(s) that would be produced (prior to the project starting)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Additional comments</p> <input type="text"/>				
<p>To have jointly agreed who was to lead the work, i.e. the artist, the participant or organisation/employer (prior to project starting)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Additional comments</p> <input type="text"/>				
<p>Other (please specify below)</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Additional comments</p> <input type="text"/>				

Supporting your project

11. What would have helped you carry out your role more effectively during the project? How helpful would the following have been?

	Very helpful	Helpful	Not helpful	Don't know
Short course(s)/training on ways that artists work with people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A module on socially engaged/participatory arts practice as part of a degree or postgraduate study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being part of a support network of peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being mentored by an experienced artist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being mentored by an experienced employer/commissioner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having undergone an apprenticeship scheme	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-directed, but supported, learning through tailored and accessible resources e.g. publications or online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regular meetings that involved the artist, the commissioner and relevant others during the project	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having a greater understanding of the artist's role within the project	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having a greater understanding of the needs of the participants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having a greater understanding of the needs of the employer's/commissioner's organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify below)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please give details

Other comments

12. Please add any other comments you would like to make here:

Thank you!

Thanks for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please contact info@engage.org if you would like to receive more information about the Navigator programme or any of the organisations involved.

Appendix 2: Online survey demographic details

Who responded –

972 respondents - Visual artists = 73.33%; Employers/commissioners of artists = 11.84%; Both (artist commissioners) = 14.83%

Number of years respondents involved in participatory/ socially engaged arts practice –

	Artists (626 respondents)	Both (artist commissioners) (137 respondents)
Less than 1 year	7.83%	.73%
1-4 years	24.44%	14.60%
5-10 years	25.56%	29.20%
11-19 years	17.89%	27.01%
20+ years	24.28%	28.47%

The number of employer respondents who work in the arts sector –

	Employers (106 respondents)
Yes	86.79%
No	13.21%

Number of years employer respondents employing/ commissioning visual artists –

	Employers (104 respondents)
Less than 1 year	4.81%
1-4 years	21.15%
5-10 years	40.38%
11-19 years	23.08%
20+ years	10.58%

Where respondents were based –

	Artists (629 respondents)	Employers (104 respondents)	Both (artist commissioners) (135 respondents)
East of England	5.09%	1.92%	2.96%
East Midlands	7.31%	8.65%	8.15%
London	21.46%	24.04%	14.07%
North East	5.41%	6.73%	4.44%
North West	7.47%	4.81%	8.15%
South East	16.06%	11.54%	14.07%
South West	12.56%	4.81%	10.37%
West Midlands	4.61%	5.77%	7.41%
Yorkshire	5.25%	5.77%	4.44%
Northern Ireland	0.64%	0%	1.48%
Scotland	4.29%	10.58%	8.89%
Wales	4.93%	8.65%	8.89%
International	31 individuals Countries listed: Spain, Isle of Man, Republic of Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, South Africa, New Zealand, Russia, Italy Panama, United States, Germany, Venezuela, Australia, France	7 individuals Countries listed: United Arab Emirates, Portugal, Netherlands, Spain, Finland, South Africa, Canada	9 individuals Countries listed: Australia, Republic of Ireland, United States, New Zealand, India, France

Year of the project respondents considered in their answers –

	Artists (501 respondents)	Employers (97 respondents)	Both (artist commissioners) (128 respondents)
2012	73.05%	83.51%	84.38%
2011	15.57%	21.65%	10.94%
2010	9.78%	14.43%	7.81%
2009	6.99%	8.25%	4.69%
2008	4.19%	8.25%	2.34%
2007	3.79%	3.09%	2.34%
2006	2.79%	3.09%	2.34%
2005	2.59%	1.03%	3.13%
2000-2004	4.19%	2.06%	3.91%
Other	20 respondents - ongoing into 2013, 2009-2012, 1999, 1980s	0 respondents	3 respondents – since 1995, ongoing into 2013

Appendix 3: Detailed information

Key Points

What follows are details of the key points made by three categories of respondent to the 12 online questions – artists, employers/hirers and those who were both practising artists and employers/commissioners of artists (artist commissioners) – and participants of the round table discussions. The many hundreds of points were analysed (including commonalities, differences and one-offs), subdivided and, broadly, arranged under the four sub-research questions. Report originally submitted to the commissioners as a draft report (v1) in January 2013.

Terms 'hirers', 'employers' and 'commissioners' are used interchangeably.

1 What are the expectations / ambitions of artists working in socially engaged practice and employers of artists working in participatory settings?

The online survey asked respondents to reflect on "the last visual arts project that you were involved with which involved an artist working with people". Of the views received, most respondents reflected on projects undertaken in 2012 – visual artists (73.05%), employers (83.51%) and artist commissioners (84.38%).

It is worth noting that a substantial number of respondents would have preferred to have been asked to reflect on their overall views, as opposed to their most recent experience. Many provided examples, e.g. their last project met all expectations whilst the previous one did not. Others explained that they were working on two-plus projects simultaneously, some of which met expectations, whilst others did not.

Online survey – overall percentages to the question: "Were expectations met?"

Visual artists – (504 respondents)	'Yes' = 79.17%;	'Partly' = 17.86%;	'No' = 2.98%
Employers – (95 respondents)	'Yes' = 86.32%;	'Partly' = 11.58%;	'No' = 2.11%
Both – (artist commissioners) (125 respondents)	'Yes' = 76%;	'Partly' = 21.60%;	'No' = 2.40%

Online survey responses to question: "How important were the following project outcomes in this most recent experience?" –

Respondents were invited to tick 'very important', 'important', 'not important' or 'don't know'. The percentages in the table below are the combined figures of those who ticked 'very important' AND 'important'. The figures in brackets denote the percentages of those who thought that particular outcome was unimportant.

	Artists (453 respondents)	Employers (88 respondents)	Both (artist commissioners) (116 respondents)
Provided an opportunity to promote or support an artist's practice	78.58% (18.97%)	85.23% (14.77%)	81.58% (17.54%)
Provided an opportunity to promote the commissioner's/ employer's organisation	74.02% (20%)	88.64% (11.36%)	84.21% (15.79%)
Provided an opportunity to commission a new artwork	57.02% (36.78%)	71.26% (27.59%)	65.18% (33.04%)
Enhanced the quality of participants' artistic exposure/ arts experience	93.53% (4.46%)	100%	96.52%
Discovered the positive impact that the artist had on participants' social, psychological and/ or educational experience	87.92% (8.72%)	92.04%	91.30%
To have secured the funding for the project	66.59% (20.91%) 12.50% ticked 'don't know'	86.21% (12.64%)	76.79% (20.54%)
Met the objectives of an existing, or new/ recent, policy maker or funder	57.51% (23%) 19.48% ticked 'don't know'	79.55% (20.45%)	72.07% (21.62%)
Learned new skills	80.63% (15.49%)	85.23% (12.50%)	80.70% (16.67%)

Provided an opportunity to work in a new context/setting/environment	84.55% (13.41%)	76.55% (17.05%)	89.48% (8.77%)
Provided an opportunity to work with a visual artist	84.40% (10.17%)	95.40%	91.96%

Additional outcomes identified by respondents

Artists	Employers	Both (artist commissioners)
"Educate clients on being an artist"	"Interpretation for exhibitions and collections for family audiences"	"To enable staff to use creative ideas/skills independently in their organisation"
Selling artwork	To work "across and between disciplines, so not totally focussed on visual arts"	That project was "artist-led"
To share creative skills and ideas with staff & give them the confidence to work with other artists		

Aggregation of key expectations/ambitions (and outcomes, albeit tangentially) identified during round table discussions AND additional comments made by respondents

Artists
That an honest, transparent and ethical management process and a good brief with realistic outcomes is developed and agreed, which is "easy to comprehend"
That artists will be able to explain (and sell) contemporary art to those who are not familiar with it – to different people in different settings/contexts who have differing understandings of it. That contemporary art is understood and that artists are "no more of a mystery as any other profession"
That the project will benefit the (i) artist (incl. decent remuneration and practice would be "developed/extended"), (ii) the community (incl. greater "cohesion") and (iii) members of that community/setting/context (incl. learning new skills, gaining in confidence, enhancing wellbeing, "have an interesting learning experience")
That the project will get the support of the wider community (achieved with the employer's help and support), i.e. participants' relatives, friends, networks
That employers will work with the artist to involve participants in the project

Artists

That the artist is supported/protected from racist, sexist, homophobic, etc. attitudes while working on the project

That the employer will support the artist if the champion/key supporter of the project leaves the organisation

That the employer has realistic expectations of the project and its outcomes

That a balance will be struck between "excellence in art" and "excellence at communicating" and collaborating (an artist's art could be great, but their facilitation and communication skills and project management skills could be weak)

That there will be flexibility and a willingness from employers and funders to be open to the unexpected, as producing art can be surprising and unpredictable. Employers need to understand that experimentation is important. They need to be open to change and surprise. They need to have the courage to trust the artist

That employers will understand the artist's role in their setting and do not have unrealistic expectations

That artists will understand their role in employers' settings

That there will be sufficient time to – (i) familiarise themselves with the context/environment and get to know the participants and others in the setting, (ii) plan the sessions, (iii) deliver the sessions, (iv) present the work, (v) reflect on practice and the legacy

That there will be space within which to work with participants to develop and execute ideas

That there will be adequate resources (incl. materials, finance, in-kind) to ensure successful delivery

That employers will not conflate projects, or market the conflated version (as this can lead to unrealistic expectations and pressure on artists and participants)

That the artist's practice has integrity

That there be seed funding during the "speculative", research phase

That the project is bespoke, i.e. developed setting-by-setting, and should not be formulaic which replicates processes from other contexts/settings

That the artist is able to explain how they work and their processes

That there is a support structure for the artist – (i) how to deal with difficult situations, (ii) introductions to local peer (artists') networks, (iii) ongoing support is provided during a project and any issues that arise are dealt with collaboratively

That producers of the art (participants and/or artists) will own the work (IP, copyright, etc)

Artists

Employers should be willing to be quizzed/interrogated by the artist on the project's idea, assumptions, aims, etc. and welcome the artist as a 'critical friend'

That the artist's practice will be respected and valued

That contemporary art, participatory/socially engaged practices, artists' working methods and processes and the qualities artists bring to settings, society and communities are understood and valued

That employers distinguish between the different aims and practice of participatory arts and artists and that of social workers/teachers/youth workers, etc

That it is understood that the artist's role is not to replace an organisation's staff, i.e. they are not to be seen, or treated as, a substitute staff member, and are not taking anyone's job away

Embed the arts and artists in the setting/context/organisation once the project finishes, i.e. artists and employers should work towards creating a legacy to ensure creative practice is sustained in the setting

That new collaborative relationships will emerge

Employers

That the work produced – product and process – is shown in the setting

The artist's role is to: (i) create work/a process that is ethical and benefits the participants, e.g. it has enabled them to "have a voice" and it has "expanded their world", (ii) explore and address social and other issues

That artists are able to explain their work and their processes in a way that is accessible and understandable

That artists are able to communicate and collaborate effectively with a wide variety of partners/stakeholders, including the hirer

That artists are able to understand (and appreciate) the different partners' and stakeholders' aims and expectations

That artists understand participants' and employers' needs

That artists will be charismatic and able to excite, enthuse and engage participants

That the artist can be trusted with the lives of the participants and will act sensitively, empathetically, sympathetically and professionally

That artists will deliver the project on time and within budget

That the artist is flexible and able to adapt their practice and facilitation skills to participants' abilities and interests

Employers

That the artist doesn't have unrealistic expectations of the host organisation, the aims/ outcomes of the project or the participants' interests and abilities

That the project is value for money, notably that participants, funders and employers will all benefit

That the artist will make a positive impact on participants (incl. increased self-confidence, wellbeing, social contacts, new skills)

That a good brief will be developed which serves both the artist's and the employer's needs. That the brief is binding, but open to modification once the artist is employed (modifications to be made in collaboration)

Expect expectations to change during a project's life. "Flexibility is important"

That the artist will be able to empathise, understand and adequately deal with the fact that participants often lead difficult and complex lives

That finance and all other resources are secured before the project begins

That there is a clear management structure

That there is clarity, understanding and agreement on outcomes – experiential and/or object production

That the employers' methodology and organisational culture is clearly articulated and is understood

That a risk assessment will be undertaken and monitored throughout the project (in collaboration with the artist and other partners). Potential challenges will be identified and mitigation strategies considered

That consensus on defining and measuring the project's success will be reached

That an independent evaluator will be engaged to critique the project and provide an opportunity for reflection and consider improvements to future projects/practice

That an understanding is reached regarding the ownership of the artwork produced during the project

That each partners'/stakeholder's expertise, expectations and roles are defined, respected and valued

That there will be help to create contracts and briefs for artists, which follow principles of good practice and are tailor-made/bespoke to the environment/context

That the project is regularly monitored and progresses to plan

That specialists, e.g. clinicians, will be involved during the development process and throughout the project, as appropriate

Both (artist commissioners)

That there is enough planning time to consult with potential and active participants of the project

That there is open and honest communication between the artist and the commissioner

That the project is well planned, well-managed and administered

That there are opportunities to reflect, build on good practice and create a legacy

That the project is delivered on time and within budget

That employers will understand the artist's role in their setting and do not have unrealistic expectations

That the artist understands the partner's/ stakeholder's – commissioner, artists, collaborators, audience, funders, participants - expectations and is able to work with these

That sufficient funds are raised before a project begins

That the artist is provided with (i) ongoing support, (ii) clear expectations

That the artist's skills and ideas are used creatively

That the project retains flexibility and is able to accommodate and adapt to unexpected changes

That artists are able, willing and understand how to collaborate and communicate with the host organisation's staff

That artists and commissioners work together to attract ("market") participants to the project

That artists are able to build relationships with participants and engage them in the project

That artists will "be paid well and have all the information to do my job properly"

2. How can artists and hirers better understand each other's practices and project aims?

Online survey responses to question: "How would you improve this most recent experience? How important would you consider these improvements to be?" –

Respondents were invited to tick 'very important', 'important', 'not important' or 'don't know'. The percentages in the table below are the combined figures of those who ticked 'very important' AND 'important'. The figures in brackets denote the percentages of those who thought that particular improvement to be unimportant.

It is worth noting that although there were opportunities for respondents to add comments (in common with all of the other questions) none appear to have been recorded, as part of this question, by Survey Monkey (this is unusual, as respondents added several comments to all of the other questions).

	Artists (373 respondents)	Employers (69 respondents)	Both (artist commissioners) (102 respondents)
An induction period prior to the artist working with participants	63.73% (28.02%)	78.46% (20%)	72.91% (19.79%)
A better understanding of the collaborating partner's (e.g. artist, commissioner) work / practice	76.60%(18.38%)	83.33% (16.67%)	76.60% (18.09%)
A better understanding and clarity of the project's aims	76.77% (18.98%)	79.36% (19.05%)	81.53% (14.13%)
To have been involved in the planning of the project	81.20% (14.53%)	80.96% (17.46%)	82.42% (12.09%)
To have been involved with negotiating the terms of the brief	75.28% (19.89%)	74.61% (20.63%)	81.52% (14.13%)
Longer planning time	62.28% (32.29%)	71.21% (25.76%)	71.74% (23.91%)

	Artists (373 respondents)	Employers (69 respondents)	Both (artist commissioners) (102 respondents)
A better understanding of the needs of participants	79.83% (17.33%)	87.50% (9.38%)	81.25% (13.54%)
A better understanding of the needs of the visual artist	78.41% (16.76%) Improvements that need to be made by hosts/hirers, according to many respondents	78.79% (19.70%)	81.52% (14.13%)
A better understanding of the employer's / commissioner's needs	71.26% (20.11%)	73.01% (25.40%)	76.08% (18.48%)
Regular communication/ meetings between the employer/ commissioner and the visual artist	78.09% (16.29%)	84.37% (14.06%)	81.52% (13.04%)
Greater willingness/ flexibility amongst the partners (e.g. the artist, commissioner/ employer, funders) to make adjustments to the project, as appropriate	76.20% (19.05%)	75.38% (21.54%)	83.16% (13.68%)
Clearer management, support and reporting processes, structures/ frameworks	72.62% (22.19%)	77.78% (19.05%)	77.18% (16.30%)
A rigorous/robust evaluation	70.57% (22.86%)	84.38% (12.50%)	84.53% (10.31%)
More funding in place before project began	67.05% (25%)	62.51% (34.38%)	65.17% (28.09%)

	Artists (373 respondents)	Employers (69 respondents)	Both (artist commissioners) (102 respondents)
More funding in place before project began	67.05% (25%)	62.51% (34.38%)	65.17% (28.09%)
Training in, e.g. facilitation, project management, managing difficult situations, safeguarding, negotiation, communication, etc	62.35% (29.60%)	70.31% (25%)	69.15% (21.28%)
To have agreed ownership of the artwork(s) that would be produced (prior to the project starting)	61.95% (29.79%)	54.69% (37.50%)	56.67% (33.33%)
To have jointly agreed who was to lead the work, i.e. the artist, the participant or organisation/ employer (prior to project starting)	67.92% (25.72%)	67.19% (28.13%)	78.16% (17.24%)

Other key points made during the round table discussions (sources unknown)

- (i) Share the ownership from the beginning by bringing the partners/stakeholders together to discuss, plan and agree the project:
- * the employer – preferably someone who has the power to make and deliver decisions and is interested enough in the project to become an advocate for it in their setting/environment,
 - * the funder(s),
 - * the artist(s) – particularly if it is an artist-led/initiated project, i.e. the opportunity will not be advertised and,
 - * the potential participant(s), as appropriate.

3 What conditions/materials would enable artists and hirers work more collaboratively to ensure both social engagement and participatory agendas are fulfilled?

AND

4 What HE courses or CPD could better prepare artists to work in this sphere?

To avoid repetition (between the views of the round table participants and respondents to the online survey), the above two questions have been dealt with together (note that courses/training and conditions/materials can also be found in the responses to questions 1 and 2).

Online survey responses to the question: "What would have helped you carry out your role more effectively during the project? How helpful would the following have been?" –

Respondents were invited to tick 'very helpful', 'helpful', 'not helpful' or 'don't know'. The percentages in the table below are the combined figures of those who ticked 'very helpful' AND 'helpful'. The figures in brackets denote the percentages of those who thought that particular point unhelpful¹.

	Artists (334 respondents)	Employers (65 respondents)	Both (artist commissioners) (96 respondents)
Short course(s)/ training on ways that artists work with people	63.83% (32.08%)	51.61% (43.55%)	55.17% (35.63%)
A module on socially engaged/ participatory arts practice as part of a degree or postgraduate study	62.70% (29.58%)	54.23% (38.98%)	55.69% (35.23%)
Being part of a support network of peers	84.22% (12.30%)	83.61% (8.20%)	89.01% (8.79%)

¹ A caveat to ticking 'not helpful': one artist explained - "When I've said 'not helpful' it's because I already feel I had the right level of support/involvement for these factors; there would have been no further advantage to having more, hence not helpful." Another ticked 'not helpful' when what they wanted to tick "not needed". While another did so when they wanted to tick 'not applicable'.

	Artists (334 respondents)	Employers (65 respondents)	Both (artist commissioners) (96 respondents)
Being mentored by an experienced artist	69.25% (25.57%)	52.45% (36.07%) 11.48% ticked 'don't know'	63.21% (32.18%)
Being mentored by an experienced employer/ commissioner	60.39% (32.34%)	70.96% (24.19%)	69.32% (26.14%)
Having undergone an apprenticeship scheme	32.14% (52.60%) 15.26% ticked 'don't know'	27.59% (63.79%)	33.72% (50%) 16.28% ticked 'don't know'
Self-directed, but supported, learning through tailored and accessible resources e.g. publications or online	64.13% (27.62%)	59/68% (29.03%) 11.29% ticked 'don't know'	69.05% (20.24%)
Regular meetings that involved the artist, the commissioner and relevant others during the project	80.57% (15.29%)	85% (10%)	81.61% (12.64%)
Having a greater understanding of the artist's role within the project	79.09% (16.67%)	66.67% (26.67%)	65.88% (23.53%)
Having a greater understanding of the needs of the participants	82.08% (14.01%)	81.67% (13.33%)	71.76% (17.65%)
Having a greater understanding of the needs of the employer's/ commissioner's organisation	73.37% (20.45%)	66.10% (25.42%)	66.66% (21.43%) 11.90% ticked 'don't know'

Additional key points made by respondents of the online survey (that have not previously been cited):

Artists	Employers	Both (artist commissioners)
<p>"Professionalising the role through taught modules etc is a sure way to ossify particular patterns of working. What is needed is more time in the situation where the work is made."</p>	<p>"I have worked with several artists in a range of participatory settings and each artist has a slightly different approach, different needs, different levels of flexibility, etc. So learning from another artist may not help, being more able/equipped to adapt during the life of the project may help."</p>	<p>"It was the hidden obstacles within the partner organisation, that the project revealed, that caused the problems."</p>
<p>There's a good MA in Community & Participatory Arts at Staffs University</p>	<p>"Why should I go on a training course about how artists work with people? Are they terribly fragile, or different from the other types of freelancer I employ?"</p>	<p>The project "suffered from inexperienced commissioning body."</p> <p>Another respondent with a similar view added that "training should be led by artists, not academics or managers – we should be given the chance to tell commissioning organisations how we work with people."</p> <p>"Some kind of guidance/good practice that the commissioners had to fulfil. Better scrutiny of the conduct/behaviour of the commissioners, especially because [this work] involved participants."</p>
<p>"I have extensive experience...I would resent a situation where qualifications become a requirement..."</p>	<p>"...all of these skills I have gained on the job."</p>	<p>"All of these things are essential, but I didn't need them because I know what I'm doing."</p>

Artists	Employers	Both (artist commissioners)
"QUAD's artists training programme was very invaluable experience"	"I have an MA in arts policy and management which addressed socially engaged art, I meet with peers through a national network, I regularly communicated with the artist and my contact at the school."	"Targeted reading/discussion around issues and approaches would be helpful."
Courses, mentors, etc. should ensure that artists are able to develop, manage and deliver their own participatory arts projects, as opposed to invariable being engaged/managed by someone else.	Many (artists and 'both') expressed similar sentiments - "Every project with artists is different, so what's needed for the commissioning organisation is an understanding of this and an ability to think creatively and support the artist. I believe this is gained largely through experience and enabling mistakes to be made."	"...shocked by how little art schools still do to train students in engaging with audiences and participants."
Several artists commented on art education - "Student artists do not appear to graduate from art institutions with the tools they need to make a decent living from their art: only teaching concept development isn't enough."	MA in Participatory Arts at Goldsmiths "has two excellent practical modules for visual artists. Creative and Cultural Learning and Community Engagement through Visual Practice. A good mixture of practice, theory and methodology."	Need a "deeper understanding of the range of socially engaged practices – 'outreach', 'participation', 'social engagement', 'collaboration', etc...an overview with definitions might be helpful."
	Recommend – Emily Druiff, Director Peckham Space "about embedding learning at degree and MA level on social engagement. University of the Arts, London."	"It is important for the artist to examine their own values and motivation before embarking on a participatory project."
		Two respondents' views: "Participatory arts are not publicised enough therefore the public do not recognise what activities are."

Artists	Employers	Both (artist commissioners)
	Recommend – Emily Druiff, Director Peckham Space “about embedding learning at degree and MA level on social engagement. University of the Arts, London.”	“It is important for the artist to examine their own values and motivation before embarking on a participatory project.”
		Two respondents' views: “Participatory arts are not publicised enough therefore the public do not recognise what activities are.” “Raising the profile of these projects by sharing, writing and raising the national public profile... in the wider media would solidify their achievements.”
		Download 'Competency Framework' drawn up by C-PAL (Consortium for Participatory Arts Learning) in the North West – http://participatoryartslearning.wordpress.com/
		“Communication is key, as is artistic ownership and understanding the balance between product and process/experience.”

Other key points made during the round table discussions (sources unknown)

- (i) Develop (new) ways of assessing/evaluating socially engaged practice – agree how success, and 'what is good', are defined and measured
- (ii) Consider how collaboration and conflict can co-exist and lead to growth and change
- (iii) Find ways of attracting and engaging participants in isolated rural settings

- (iv) Institute a peer-to-peer/artist-to-artist review process/framework, which is built on trust, is confidential and private. The review to provide:
 - * Time for reflection
 - * A review of performance, include artists watching each other in action
 - * Joint mentoring/support opportunity

- (v) Institute a manager-to-artist-to-manager review process/framework during the project. This relationship needs to be built on trust and should be confidential and private. The aim would be to:
 - * improve/enhance practice and mutual understanding
 - * provide time for reflection
 - * review performance

Consider studio based courses

Course content should include:

 - * Placing this area of work in its historical context
 - * Understanding the importance of good briefs and contracts and how to create them
 - * Learning how to cost projects
 - * Understanding the ethics of socially engage/participatory arts practice, including the ethics of representation – “how do I represent...?”
 - * Understanding the audience’s/public’s role and how to involve them
 - * Developing communication, negotiation and listening skills, including (i) understanding how groups, and the individuals within them, work (theory and practice) and (ii) ways of describing contemporary arts practice, socially engaged and participatory arts practice to the ‘uninitiated’
 - * Learning how to collaborate and negotiate effectively (with the arts and non-arts sectors)
 - * Developing social skills in one-to-one and group situations
 - * Knowing (i) how to resolve conflicts and (ii) when conflict can be a positive and enabling force
 - * Opportunities for students to continue developing and reflecting on their practice
 - * Methods of facilitating and working with people – including the disadvantaged, marginalised and disenfranchised – which are appropriate to the specific group and their needs, are bespoke and do not adhere to a rigid formula

- * **Field placements, which would enable students to shadow/support experienced artists working in participatory/socially engaged contexts**
- * **Legal issues, e.g. safeguarding and insurances**
- * **Ethical considerations when working with people**
- * **Time management and other management skills, including project management**
- * **Understanding social policy and political issues and the impact of these on participants**

Artists' Lab Report:

Foundation for Community Dance

Anna Leatherdale

December 2012

1. Executive Summary

The Foundation for Community Dance facilitated an Artists' Lab on 22 and 23 October in Birmingham at which eight artists from the participatory or community arts field took part from across four disciplines – dance, music, visual arts and writing. The Lab aimed to identify the commonalities and differences that there have historically been and currently exist between the initial training and continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities available to artists practicing across different artforms.

During the course of the two days the artists identified many similarities and a few differences in the education and training that had led them to their current career point. They also identified and agreed upon a wide range of skills and attitudinal qualities that they felt that artists in their sector needed to have to be successful. In relation to their vocational training they all agreed that:

- (i) **getting to know their genre and the skills required for the production of art had formed the central part of their vocational training. They had all given the opportunity to get to know the material that was central to their craft**
- (ii) **lack of adequate careers advice still left those attracted to the arts sector with a false view of what life as an artists could be and failed to show arts in a participatory context as a viable and valuable option**
- (iii) **students of the arts needed to be encouraged to become reflective practitioners as soon as possible so that they gained a better understanding of themselves and were able to evaluate their skills and identify their own learning needs. More work needed to be done by training providers to help artists become self-reflective**
- (iv) **artists would benefit from learning some of the supporting skills they need to be effective through learning with other artists in a cross artform environment.**

On the topic of continuing professional development all participants agreed that:

- (i) **CPD in relation to functional (time-management, financial etc) and artistic skills was a very important aspect of a practitioners' life**
- (ii) **Engagement in CPD should be a requirement for retaining membership of a professional arts organisation**

- (iii) **More work needed to be done by CPD providers to ensure that the aims, learning outcomes and levels of CPD provision were made clear to those seeking to engage**
- (iv) **Artists from different art forms might happily share CPD opportunities – depending on the content and focus of the opportunity**
- (v) **CPD was available through a very wide range of activities across all the arts fields**
- (vi) **On-line resources made a valuable contribution to CPD although online courses were not suitable for all learners or all subjects.**

All the artists enjoyed being part of the Artists' Lab and welcomed the opportunity to network across art forms.

2. Introduction

Aims

The aims of the Artists' Lab were to identify the commonalities and differences that there have historically been and currently exist between the initial training and continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities available to artists practicing across different artforms.

The Artists' Lab took place on 22 and 23 October 2012 at the Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) in Birmingham. A total of eight artists took part from across four disciplines – dance, music, visual arts and writing – although some of the artists taking part worked across more than one sector and included a musician who worked extensively in drama.

The workshop took place over two days and comprised a broad range of consultation mechanisms that included the construction of visual representations of the artists' developmental pathways, the completion of questionnaires, one-to-one and small group discussions, as well as large group discussions. A photographic record was taken of the visual pathways that the artists created (see Appendix 1).

The workshop was facilitated by Anna Leatherdale, Professional Development Manager at the Foundation for Community Dance (FCD). She was supported by Ken Bartlett, Artistic Director of Foundation for Community Dance and Lindsay Jenkins (FCD).

The two days of consultation were relaxed and enjoyable and provided the participants with the opportunity to network with colleagues across artforms, as well as engaging in debate and discussions.

Participants

Eight artists participated in the Lab:

- * Alex Julyan is a sculptor and events producer who works with a range of other practitioners including musicians, dancers and actors
- * Louise Bardgett is a movement artist specialising in work with primary and early years groups
- * Rosalind Goddard – a writer. Much of her work helps teachers see how to make poetry more creative and accessible
- * Xenia Horne is a a facilitator, musician/ actor and writer, using music and the performing arts to create community choirs and site specific projects.
- * Rebecca Gross is a singer who is involved in leading a number of community choirs
- * Diane Amans is a dance practitioner who aims to make dance accessible to all sections of the community and is particularly well-known for her work with dance and older people
- * Zakia Carpenter-Hall is a writer, multidisciplinary artist, facilitator and personal coach. She currently delivers workshops on a freelance basis in visual art, museum exhibits or creative writing.
- * Liz Ellis manages adult Community Learning at Tate Modern. She has worked as a visual artist since 1988, focusing much of her work on site and shared public spaces.

A full outline of the artists involved is in Appendix 2

3. Initial Professional/Vocational Learning

The first activity that participants were asked to engage in was to create a visual representation of the routes that they had taken to becoming artists and practitioners across the participatory arts sector. They were asked to pay particular attention to the initial training that seemed relevant to the development of their artform expertise and were asked to note those events or activities – whether formal or informal – that had had a significant impact on their learning journey. The resulting 'pathway' included information about the age they had undertaken specific education or training activities and the points in their lives at which they had made significant decisions in relation to their artform practice. Once they had created their visual interpretation of their developmental journey they were asked to take another artist from a different arts background along their pathway and discuss the similarities and differences they encountered along the way.

All the artists agreed that while they had all taken different and diverse routes during their initial pre-vocational training there were a number of shared similarities:

4. Common Pre-Vocational Experiences

Getting to know your genre

Learning about their artform had been central to all of their experiences. They had needed to gain an understanding of the fundamental principles relating to their artform (i.e. the body and use of space for dancers, language and the structures of form in writing, etc).

Having time to develop their practical artform-specific skill had been a central part of their early arts education. They had needed the time to explore, practice and experiment. Trial and error had been a central part of this process for them all.

Career prospects

All participants recounted some level of struggle before settling down to life as an artist. In some cases participants fought against family concerns, desires and preconceptions about their future employment prospects.

“My parents wanted me to be a doctor. Although we did loads of musical stuff at home I stayed on at school and did my A’levels. I didn’t want to be a doctor but struggled for ten years without having music in my life because I wanted a ‘credible’ career. It was having a child with very severe disabilities that made me go on to do what I really wanted. It gave me an enormous sense of achievement.”

Fantasy vs reality

All the participants agreed that there was usually a significant gap between the ideal of what being an artist would be like and the actuality of living and working as an artist. They felt that much more needed to be done both at school and at the pre-vocational training level to give would-be artists a better understanding of what life would actually be like and the range of skills and abilities that artists need on a day-to-day basis.

“People believe when they go in to do a degree in dance that they’re going to come out and run their own dance company. Then they find they have to eat and pay the bills. They get dragged into teaching and participatory practice. Many don’t really have either the skills or inclination to work in the sector but they find they have little choice so they muddle through.”

“More and more of my peers have gone on to do an MA in community music because when they started their training they didn’t realise what they were actually going to be doing. Of course they all wanted to be concert pianists, but you can’t earn your money that way, so they do their course, bide their time doing community work while they’re waiting to be ‘discovered’.”

“There’s something about the fantasy that we inhabit in our early years.... people going to conservatoires have a fantasy about what they’re going to be. It’s really difficult when they’re in their third year – trying to get them to know that their arts world isn’t necessarily shaped in the way they think it is. It’s compounded by the profession that wants to maintain that hierarchy (and retain the funding that goes with it).”

Hierarchy in the arts

The participants discussed the hierarchies within the arts that still persistently appear to value 'performance' over community practice. They all felt it was very unfortunate that more artists were not making a positive and proactive choice to work as community practitioners but agreed this lack of positive choice happened because there was still very poor careers advice in relation to the arts, coupled with a societal pressure that valued 'high/performance' arts over community practice. They noted that this was particularly unfortunate for a number of reasons: firstly because the community arts sector was failing to attract artists with the key people-focused skills that were so essential to operating as a community practitioner; and secondly because high quality community practice had a lot to offer arts practitioners who were willing and able to develop the skills needed to work in the sector. All participants agreed that participatory practice was highly rewarding, offered positive creative challenges to the artists and participants, was diverse in content and context, offered a steady and adequately paid source of employment and offered good support structures thanks to the various local and national support organisations.

Lack of careers information

"People need to be more supported in knowing their own needs, skills and desires. When I do sessions with undergraduates they talk about their aspirations, but they haven't thought much about themselves – about their strengths and weaknesses and what they need to learn. They also haven't got a clear understanding of what the sector has to offer and what skills they'll need to succeed. They have very limited self awareness and don't know how to check out what they're good at."

Self-identification

All the participants said that at some point in their careers as artists they had all experienced a moment of self-identification when they clearly recognised that the participatory practice was making a significant and positive difference to the lives of the people they were working with and led them to a moment of self-realisation – a 'this is what I'm meant to do' moment.

Serendipity

All the participants agreed that one of the reasons that they felt their careers had been so successful was because they were willing to take risks and pursue unexpected opportunities.

"You have childhood glimpses of what you wanted to be. Moments when there were fantastic teachers who give you permission and encourage you to do things outside your comfort zone. Then there are those times when unexpected things happen – no matter how much you want to do something, it's the chance comment, a publishable poem, a light being turned on – that can make the vital difference."

5. Mixed experiences

Routes into practice

Participants had arrived at the start of their artistic careers at a very wide range of times and by diverse routes. About half of the participants had set out specifically to gain a vocational arts training by going to college or university to study their arts subject. The others had started off in a completely different field of practice before 'discovering' the arts as a career option.

“I came to the arts later in life than many. Both my parents had been teachers and I originally trained as a mental health nurse. One day I was drawing with someone who was very ill and I realised that it had the power to change lives in a way that nothing else had. So I changed direction.”

Lack of emphasis on supporting skills

Most of the participants felt that when they left their vocational training course they had the basis of a good grounding in their artform-specific skills but were inadequately equipped to secure and deliver work. Discussions amongst group members showed that this was primarily because the acquisition of industry-specific knowledge (where to find work and how to approach potential employers, legal compliance relating to their arts practice, etc) had tended to be delivered as a secondary level of requirement (except in one case where the third year of the course had been structured in such a way as to require all the participants to set up and deliver real projects in a community context throughout the third year – thereby requiring the students to gain a first-hand, practical understanding of supporting skills that were central to the artists practice).

6. Differences

Choosing participatory arts

Whilst some of the practitioners who had arrived at an arts career later in life had specifically chosen to work in a community context it was generally agreed that the majority of people working in the participatory arts sector came to it as a second-choice, primarily as a result of lack of adequate or appropriate careers advice. Some participants felt that they had experienced a gradual slide into participatory arts practice while others felt that they had set out with the firm intention to deliver arts in a community route.

Performance and non-performance disciplines

Participants agreed that during vocational training performance artists generally needed to acquire a greater level of technical expertise in their disciplines than non-performance artists. This meant that those involved in a performance art had often begun their technical training much earlier than those people working in non-performance fields. Everyone agreed that this

often had a negative effect for performers in that there was a greater risk that they would become confined to a particular performance style or genre or would suffer from poor levels of early technique teaching.

“If you’ve learnt in the classical style of singing you can’t use it for folk and jazz, etc. It requires a physical change.”

Several of the performance artists noted that during the early part of their life they had, at times, felt disadvantaged because they had not been able to access learning in the ‘classical’ styles of their artform. However they all agreed that in the long-run this had been to their advantage as it had broadened their experience and given them a more creative approach to their artform.

Visual arts

Visual artists agreed that the foundation year had been a common experience of visual artists of their generation. It had provided a highly valued opportunity that enabled artists to get a sense of the range of materials they might work with in the future. Within its one-year structure it enabled artists to get a sense about whether or not they really wanted to pursue art as a profession. All the other arts practitioners agreed that it would be a value asset to any training programme but recognised the economic prohibitions on including a foundation year in all areas of practice in the current economic climate.

“The Foundation Year used to be an important experience. It was a year where traditionally people did a year of playing with ‘stuff’. Economically unsustainable it can’t now be afforded. Now it’s the portfolio for visual artists too. The portfolio needs to show working across budgets, managing projects.....”

Creativity

The musicians and dancers in the group generally agreed that access to vocational training courses was increasingly more inclusive. More young people appeared to be making the move into vocational training having had prior experience in youth groups rather than having progressed through a graded examination syllabus. In their view this was leading to the development of more adaptable and creative artists rather than those who were fixed to one specific genre or technique.

“Now young musicians experience lots of things in their field that are beyond their formal music education. They’re very proactive rather than being passive recipients. They’re going to youth groups and Saturday morning schools and these are the ones that universities and conservatoires are looking for. This experiential learning seems to have more currency now than the grades.”

Those artists from the non-performance sectors agreed that aspirants to a vocational training were increasingly being asked to show a diversity of practice and commitment to their artform before they entered vocational training.

What worked

Overall, participants agreed that a number of things worked well during their vocational training experience, namely:

- * The practical experience of being supported and resourced in relation to their artform
- * The exploration of their artform
- * Freedom to experiment
- * Being immersed in a creative environment (with supporting teachers, colleagues, visitors)
- * Being given constructive criticism
- * Active integration of art and life
- * The acquisition of technical knowledge

.....and what didn't

All participants felt that their vocational training was lacking in a number of key areas, namely:

- * Contextualisation of their artform practice in relation to industry and societal needs
- * Too little feed-in to their courses from people already working in the sector
- * Too little CPD for the tutors on their courses – with the result that their tutors failed to develop and refresh their own practice
- * The lack of experienced mentors to help guide them through the transitional period from recent graduate to industry professional
- * Gender imbalance
- * Favouritism.

Rigor and assessment

There were two areas where participants held strong but differing views about their experiences of vocational training. This was in relation to the levels of rigour on their courses and the systems of assessment used by their training providers. Some participants felt there was a lack of rigour on their courses with the students being offered too much freedom and not enough guidance. Some participants also felt that there was a significant lack of rigour in the assessment processes operated by their institutions. Some felt that the criteria used for assessment was too random and not applied effectively in the marking of assignments. Others felt that assessment criteria had been well constructed and applied within their own institutions.

7. Qualities

In addition to a specific skills-set and irrespective of the artform that they practiced in practitioners agreed that community artists needed to be:

Open-minded	Problem-solving
Flexible	Confident
Curious	Brave
Empathetic	Resourceful
Visionary	Able to communicate
Interested in people and in their artform	Supportive
Determined	Constructively critical
Responsive	Reflective
Reflexive	Resilient
Mindful	Daring
Humble	Inclusive
Understanding	Perseverant
Playful	Empowering
Have a belief in their work and in themselves	

Essential and unique artform-specific skills and understanding

Participants worked with the other practitioner from their sector and then with the group as a whole to discuss the range of skills that they felt were essential for artists to acquire during their initial training in order to become an effective community arts practitioner. All the participants agreed that there were in fact a very small range of skills that they needed to learn which were very specifically related to their particular artform.

See Appendix 3 for list of core skills by arts discipline

8. Skills shared across the sectors

There was a further list of skills that participants felt were necessary for their effective functioning as artists which they agreed were common to all artform practices and could therefore be learnt in a mixed arts context. They noted that learning these generic skills in mixed artform groups might be more beneficial for artists than learning them in artform specific 'silos' as joint learning opportunities would promote greater cross artform collaboration.

The list of skills that might be shared across artforms included:

- * **Project management**
- * **Personal organisational skills**
- * **Self-discipline**
- * **Time management**
- * **People management**
- * **Effective communication – text and presentations**
- * **Evaluation**
- * **Research**
- * **The ability to pitch for work and justify work**
- * **Advocacy**
- * **Partnership working**
- * **Creative networking**
- * **Cross-art collaboration**
- * **Marketing**
- * **Fundraising**
- * **Finance**
- * **ICT**
- * **Leadership**
- * **Developing emotional understanding in participants**
- * **Contextual skills (policies, copyright, safeguarding etc)**

9. Pre-vocational training summary

All participants agreed that:

- * **getting to know their genre and the skills required for the production of art had formed the central part of their vocational training. They were all given the opportunity to get to know the material that was central to their craft**
- * **more work needed to be done by training providers to enable students to develop the skills that would support artists in their daily practice in securing and maintaining work**
- * **lack of adequate careers advice still left those attracted to the arts sector with a false view of what life as an artist could be and failed to show arts in a community context as a viable and valuable option. Artists would benefit from having more contact with industry professionals during the course of their training**

- * students of the arts needed to be encouraged to become reflective practitioners as soon as possible so that they gained a better understanding of themselves and were able to evaluate their skills and identify their own learning needs. More work needed to be done by training providers to help artists become self-reflective
- * no matter which artform they practice in, community arts practitioners need a wide range of skills and attitudinal qualities to be effective in their practice
- * artists would benefit from learning some of the supporting skills they need to be effective through learning with other artists in a cross artform environment
- * Britain offers a unique process-driven approach to training artists which is perceived as a valuable global asset in fostering creativity.

10. Qualifications

Practitioners were asked to list the full range of qualifications that they possessed which they felt were relevant to their careers as community artform practitioners. Four of the artists listed graded examinations that they had taken as a child, all but one of the graded exams listed were in musical subjects. In conversation participants agreed that graded exams in any artform were less and less important as a step to pre-vocational training as there were an increasing number of other routes offered by youth and community groups. All the artists had undertaken undergraduate courses at a Higher Education level with several having completed post-graduate studies and one being currently engaged in an MPhil. All but one of the artists listed their driving licence as one of their essential qualifications and commented on how indispensable it was – particularly for those artists working in a rural context. Several artists listed secondary school level English, French and German exams as being valuable to their practice.

See Appendix 4 for list of participants' qualifications

The participants discussed the value of qualifications and agreed that some employers, particularly those in the education or health sectors, valued qualifications. It was agreed that qualifications acted as an accepted 'short-hand' that helped employers identify the level of experience that practitioners might have. It also showed a level of commitment to the practitioner's own desire to learn and refresh their knowledge of the subject.

“I was interviewed by a head teacher in a nursery. It was a day-long interview. The thing that got me the job was that I was doing the Master's in Education and that I already have my Masters in music. She liked that the work would be used as a case study and saw my desire to do another qualification as a demonstration of my own commitment to learning.”

Some participants felt that there was an increasing demand for qualifications. One of the writers noted that

“Most people think that there’s an increased demand now for qualifications. They’re looking for a doctorate now for teaching writing in a university. It’s partly because there’s been an explosion of creative writing degrees: it’s led to lots of people in the tertiary education sector who may not have the experience but have got the qualification.”

Participants noted that in some cases it was the context in which they were working that determined the on-going demand for qualifications or continuing professional development as some institutions gained organisational credibility if their employees were well qualified.

Participants noted that employers also valued qualifications like a driving licence because it demonstrated the artists’ autonomy and reflected on their ability to deliver.

All those present agreed that for them the most important aspect of getting a new qualification was that learning that led to the final certificate – rather than the qualification itself. However they also agreed that whether or not qualifications were important was affected by whether the artist wanted to be an employee of a particular organisation or were intending to work on a self-employed basis. They agreed that being an employee required them to deliver a higher level of ‘proof’ (via qualifications) of their ability than working on short-term freelance contracts. At the same time participants agreed that in most instances employers have a very poor understanding of what has been demanded of a practitioner for them to have acquired a specific qualification. They felt that this mirrored well most employers’ general lack of understanding about the skills and knowledge needed to be an effective arts practitioner in any context.

11. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

On the second day of the consultation the discussions focused on continuing professional development (CPD).

Participants began by discussing why they engaged in CPD. The reasons they proposed were varied, and included:

- * **Updating knowledge (ie new policies)**
- * **Gaining new skills and understanding**
- * **Critical thinking and questioning**
- * **Reflection**
- * **Looking for ‘that light-bulb moment’ (inspiration)**
- * **Opportunities for networking**
- * **Re-engagement with the wider context**
- * **Time-out from daily practice**

- * Validation of experience/practice/learning
- * Learning about best and worst practice
- * Exploring a range of approaches to arts delivery
- * Self-affirmation (Yes, I can/do this)

Characteristics of good CPD

Participants agreed that good CPD needed to:

- * Match the participants' expectations
- * Be inspiring
- * Be delivered through open and effective communication
- * Be something that participants could apply to their practice
- * Offer opportunities for experiential learning
- * Offer opportunities for networking and exchanges
- * Some of the participants felt that it should also offer a new experience, although this was not essential for all participants.

Functional and Creative CPD

Participants found it helpful to divide CPD into two fields: functional CPD that would bring the participant up to date with skills and knowledge needed to support their practice; and creative CPD that inspired and reinvigorated their artistic work. They provided the following examples:

Functional CPD	Creative CPD
Fundraising	New cultural tradition
First Aid	Detailed exploration of harmony
Arts Award	Learning a new instrument
Licensing	Cross artform collaboration
Copyright	Participating in an artform
PRS	New technology in creative contexts
Web building	Time for self-reflection and development
High level networking	Protected time on a residency
Social media	
Intellectual property rights (IPR)	
Pitching and commissioning	
Marketing	
Resource management	

Participants all agreed that engaging in both forms of CPD were essential and agreed that it should be a requirement for retaining membership of a professional arts organisation.

Constraints on accessing CPD

Participants also discussed the constraints they faced in relation to participating in CPD. The biggest constraint that all the participants faced was finding the time to engage in CPD. They noted that existing work commitments, as well as commitments to maintaining a balanced lifestyle often made it difficult to participate in as much CPD as they would like to. Lack of financial resources and the cost of some CPD was also a major prohibitive factor, as was the difficulty of identifying whether the CPD offered by some providers was suitable for each practitioner's particular level of experience. Participants noted that it was often difficult to find the kind of CPD they were looking for and there was the added difficulty that CPD providers were often not specific enough about the aims and learning outcomes of the CPD and the level of experience it was being pitched towards.

Participants noted a number of other factors that constrained their engagement in CPD. They noted that experiencing poor quality provision, coupled with a fear of engaging in the unknown was occasionally a cause for concern. They agreed that at some level there was also the need to give self-permission to engage in CPD as it too often felt like a self-indulgent luxury to spend time and money on oneself. Participants also agreed that cultural perceptions of CPD could also inhibit some practitioners from taking part. They noted that some arts practitioners appeared to feel that if they were the leaders or teachers of an artform it might seem like they had a weakness or did not know what they were doing if they engaged in CPD and others saw them doing this. The participants agreed that more needed to be done by national organisations to improve the image of CPD so that it became something that everyone should give themselves the opportunity to engage in.

Readiness

Participants spent time discussing how CPD opportunities could be made most effective and bring the greatest benefit to the people participating in them. They agreed that the single greatest influence was the participant's readiness to learn and engage with their chosen topic. They noted that some learning could only be undertaken fruitfully if participants had acquired a certain level of knowledge and experience beforehand. They needed to be at the right point in their career to make sense of the CPD opportunity on offer. This was closely linked to finding the right match of level of course/CPD opportunity in relation to the practitioner's level of experience.

Mentors

Participants agreed that it would be wonderful if some sort of mentoring system could be put in place to guide new practitioners in their learning. If senior practitioners could be paired with new practitioners they could suggest directions for exploration at the appropriate time in the new practitioner's career. The mentoring programme would need to be carefully thought through to ensure a good match between partners to ensure that participants were both supported and challenged. A participant noted that '*Enterprising women*' have a very good mentoring model that is used in the business sector.

List of CPD activities

Participants listed a wide range of CPD activities that they had engaged in. (See Appendix 5) There was no perceptible difference between the type and range of activities engaged in by practitioners from different artforms. They welcomed the idea of engaging in some creative CPD opportunities with artists from different artforms as most participants felt strongly that this had the potential to stimulate discussions and could lead to cross-artform collaboration.

Qualifications in relation to CPD

Participants agreed that one of the advantages in taking part in CPD was that it provided a good starting point when talking with potential employers. It showed continuing commitment to personal learning and engagement with the arts practice. However participants had mixed views about whether they would like their CPD to result in an accredited qualification. Some felt that having a certificate that showed the range of issues covered in the course was sufficient to show to an employer. Others felt that having nationally recognised qualifications as a result of a CPD course was important because some employers were so unfamiliar with the issues that arts practitioners needed to learn they needed to have the short-hand approval provided by a nationally recognised qualification in order to feel confident that the arts practitioner had engaged in CPD that was of value.

Online learning

Managing learners' expectations was a key issue identified by participants in the discussion about the potential offered by online CPD opportunities. Members of the group returned to their concerns about ensuring that course providers adequately described the level and learning outcomes of a course – whether online or face-to-face. Several of the participants had taken part in online CPD opportunities. Experiences and views were mixed with the majority of participants having had positive and useful experiences.

Widening access

Those who had enjoyed online learning had noted the convenience of being able to take part from home – resulting in a reduction of time and travel costs. Those working in rural locations also noted that online learning gave them the opportunity to work with a much wider range of people than they would have been able to do in their local community. One on-line course had provided access to very high calibre coaches and provided the opportunity for participants to interact with one another and their tutors. These benefits would not have been available to a course participant at a local training session.

Visual artists noted that *Artquest* had been giving access to seminars via the internet for some time. Those wishing to take part could either do so in real time and interact with others in the seminar or watch a recording of a seminar at a later date – thereby increasing the flexibility of the learning opportunity. *Artquest* was considered to be particularly good at offering CPD relating to the 'functional' issues that the Lab participants identified on day one.

Learning styles

Some participants were less interested in engaging in on-line learning as they felt strongly that they learnt best when they were able to interact on a face-to-face level with other people – whether tutors or course participants.

Others liked the wide range of support materials that could be accessed on an on-line course and noted that the best courses offered opportunities for interaction, video examples of case studies, as well as reading lists to support the subject.

Online resources

In addition to Artquest, participants noted that there were an increasing number of organisations offering online resources. These included:

- * Equity
- * Foundation for Community Dance
- * Musicians' Union
- * Music Leader
- * Sound Sense
- * NAWA
- * Arts Council England

Plus local regional support agencies, Facebook groups, specialist networks and conferences.

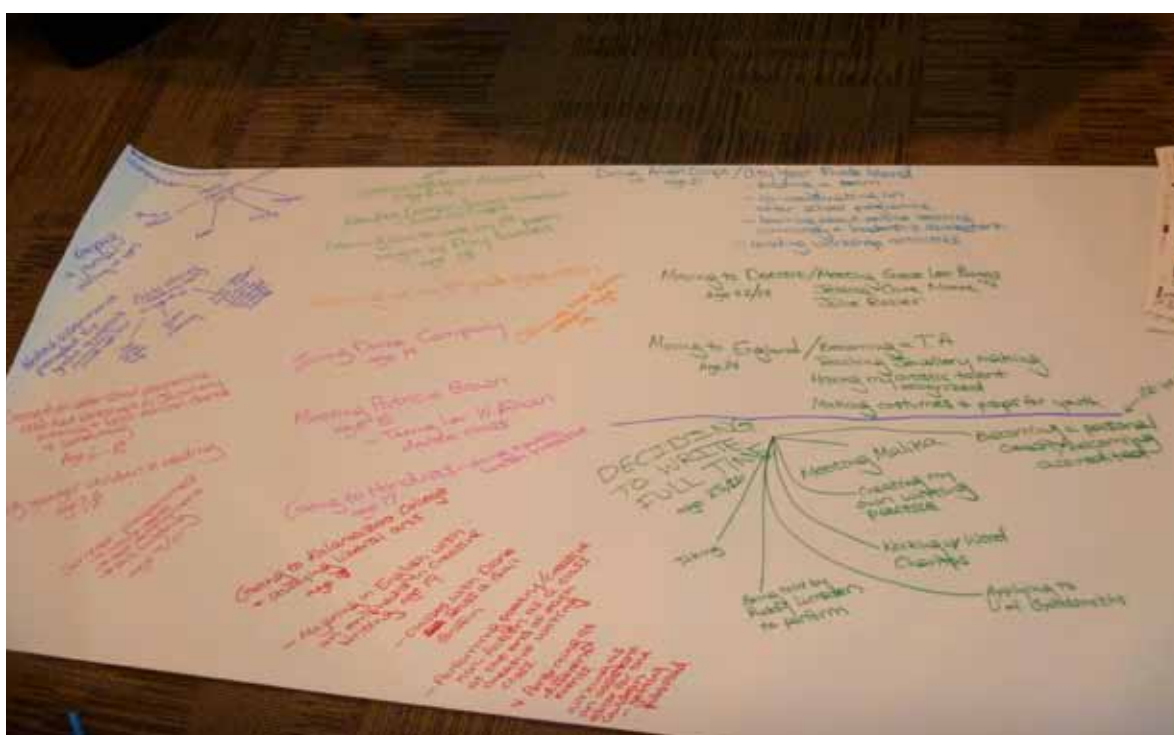
12. CPD summary

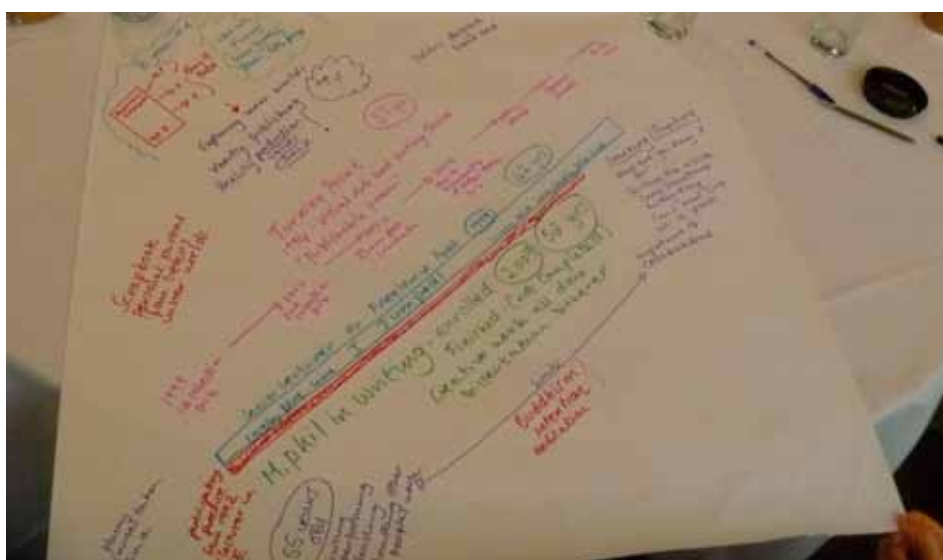
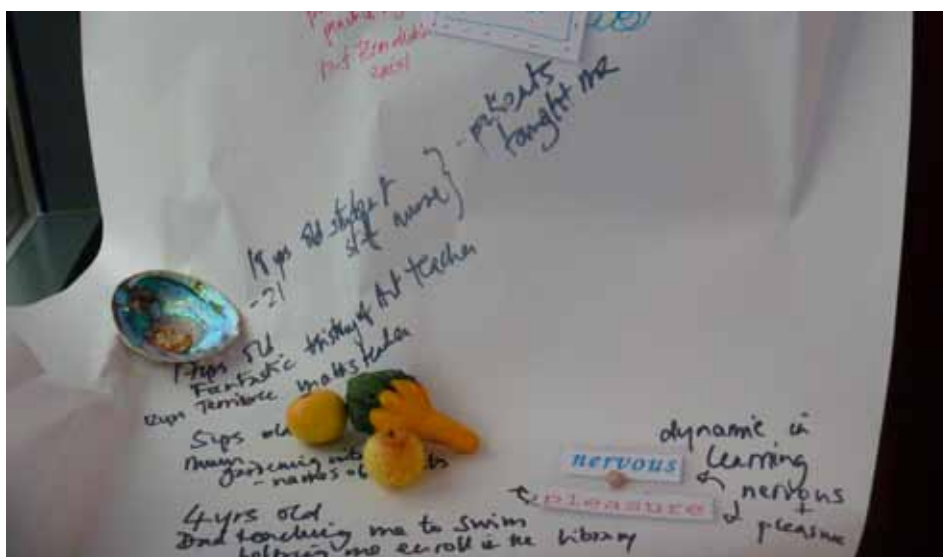
All participants agreed that:

- (i) CPD in relation to functional and artistic skills was a very important aspect of a practitioner's life
- (ii) Engagement in CPD should be a requirement for retaining membership of a professional arts organisation
- (iii) More work needed to be done by CPD providers to ensure that the aims, learning outcomes and levels of CPD provision were made clear to those seeking to engage
- (iv) Artists from different artforms might happily share CPD opportunities – depending on the content and focus of the course
- (v) The introduction of a good mentoring programme could be very valuable to the arts community
- (vi) CPD was available through a very wide range of activities across all the arts fields
- (vii) Online resources made a valuable contribution to CPD although online courses were not suitable for all learners or all subjects.

Participants were divided on the issue of whether CPD courses should necessarily lead to a nationally recognised qualification. Some form of certificate for CPD courses was recommended but a qualification was only required in particular circumstances.

Appendix 1: Examples of participants' pathways





Appendix 2: Profile of participating artists

Alex Julyan is a sculptor and events producer who works with a range of other practitioners including musicians, dancers and actors. Much of her work takes place in an educational context. She is currently working in the British Library where she encourages people to develop a new approach to libraries and their collection by exploring philosophy and play. She recently co-devised an 'art school for seniors', a week long opportunity for older people to explore art within a critical framework.

Louise Bardgett is a movement artist currently working as a project manager for an EU funded programme – LEADER- in rural areas. She specialises in work with primary and early years settings. In addition to being a trainer and consultant for early years groups she also works as part of an independent artists collective that encourages people to find different ways of interacting with the outdoors through cross-fertilisation of art forms, ideas and approaches. Louise is currently undertaking a year-long course to become a teaching assistant.

Rosalind Goddard is a writer and poet. She worked in the Further Education sector for 20 years creating access to writing courses for adults – particularly women returners. For the last 12 years she has worked with art galleries and with teachers in school, helping teachers see how to make poetry more creative and accessible. She is the coordinator for the West Midlands Readers' Network – funded by the Arts Council. She is currently undertaking an M.Phil.

Xenia Horne is a a facilitator, musician/ actor and writer, using music and the performing arts to create community choirs and site specific projects. She enjoys creating opportunities for people in all settings to access creative activities and works in mainstream settings and with vulnerable children and adults. Xenia is also an assessor of theatre for the Arts Council, inspects music and performing arts for Ofsted, and examines Speech and Drama subjects for Trinity College London.

Rebecca Gross is a singer who is involved in leading a number of community choirs. She runs a day time community choir for people who are out of work for one reason or another. She is very keen on making singing active and taking it out in to the world by undertaking a range of activities such as flash mobs. Rebecca is also involved in a number of youth music projects and specialises in developing language and communication skills in an early years context. Her work involves parents and children working together. Many of the children who she works with are on the autistic spectrum.

Diane Amans is a dance practitioner who believes in promoting exercise by stealth and playtime for grandmas! She aims to make dance accessible to all sections of the community and is particularly well-know for her work with dance and older people. She is currently running a project for older adults with dementia. She has written a number of books on dance and has recently been exploring the use of film in a dance context. She delivers continuing professional development for dance practitioners in a range of contexts – including the Foundation for Community Dance's Summer School course, Passport to Practice.

Zakia Carpenter-Hall is a writer, multidisciplinary artist, facilitator and personal coach. She currently delivers workshops on a freelance or casual basis in visual art, museum exhibits or creative writing. She is interested in leadership development, has participated in community development initiatives in the US and UK and mentored youth doing similar projects. She also performs her poetry and is a published author.

Liz Ellis manages adult Community Learning at Tate Modern. Having completed a Masters in Human Rights at UCL in 2012, she is currently focussed on the role of policy, practice and democracy in relation to participatory arts. She is particularly interested in researching what 'participatory' means and to whom within the local, national and international contexts of a major contemporary art gallery. She has worked as a visual artist since 1988, focussing much of her work on site and shared public spaces, see www.riversunderthepavement.org for examples of practice and current projects

Artists' Lab Report:

Working as an artist with
people with dementia

– NAWÉ

John Killick

September 2012

1. Executive Summary

This report distils the learning from two roundtables held by NAWE (National Association of Writers in Education) exploring the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to work as a writer and artist with people with dementia, focusing in particular on the commonalities and differences between art forms and the implications for training, qualifications and standards.

The roundtables were held on 10/11 October and 6/7 November 2012 at the Campus for Ageing and Vitality at Newcastle University as part of NAWE's work with 'ArtWorks: Developing Practice in Participatory Settings', a Paul Hamlyn Foundation Special Initiative.

Participants: Writers' Roundtable: Moyra Donaldson, Karen Hayes, Susanna Howard, Rebecca Jenkins, Romi Jones, Jacqui Rowe, Lucy Whitman, and Paul Munden (Director, NAWE). Artists' Roundtable: Richard Coaten, Claire Craig, Lowri Evans, Claire Garabedian, Mona McCarthy, Maria Oller, Alison Mercer, Rebecca Pedlow, Jayne Wallace, and Sarah Zoutewelle-Morris. Written submissions were also received from David Clegg (writer) and Bisakha Sarker (artist). John Killick (Chair), Philippa Johnston (Co-ordinator).

Both Roundtables were sent a briefing paper prepared by John Killick, based on a short survey of arts and dementia activity and research in the UK, (see Appendix One) and shared the same agenda. In the following account, participants' names have been omitted, with the abbreviation WR being used for the Writers' Roundtable and AR for the Artists' Roundtable.

'ArtWorks: Developing Practice in Participatory Settings' is a Paul Hamlyn Foundation Special Initiative to support the continuing professional development of artists working in participatory settings. It has support and funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Creativity Culture & Education (supported by Arts Council England) and the Cultural Leadership Programme. www.artworksphf.org.uk

2. About the author

John Killick has worked for twenty years as a writer with people with dementia. For six of these he was Research Fellow in Communication Through the Arts at Dementia Services Development Centre, the University of Stirling. Currently, as well as working at the Courtyard Centre for the Arts in Hereford, he is Writer in Residence for Alzheimer Scotland.

His publications include, as well as many articles, papers and chapters, a number of books in the field, including a collaborative text with Kate Allan *Communication and the Care of People with Dementia*, which was published by Open University Press in 2001, and *Creativity and Communication in Persons with Dementia*, which was co-authored with Claire Craig and published by Jessica Kingsley in 2011. He has edited six books of poems by people with dementia.

In the wider field of literature, John was for ten years a small press publisher, and Founding Secretary of NAWE. He has co-authored with Myra Schneider two creative writing texts, and had two volumes of his own poetry published. He is a regular contributor to *The North*.

3. About NAWE

NAWE's mission is to further the knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of Creative Writing and to support good practice in its teaching and learning at all levels. As a professional membership organization, NAWE aims to assist contemporary writers of all genres both in developing their own practice and sharing their art, craft and imagination with new writers of all ages and backgrounds in a wide range of educational and community settings. www.nawe.co.uk

4. Similarities and Differences

In considering whether working with people with dementia was different from working with other groups in the community, both Roundtables expressed common views, namely that the differences acknowledged between the two modes of working far outweighed the similarities.

Amongst the similarities identified were: 1) Person-centredness is a given; 2) Stigma is in common; 3) so is being subject to extreme marginalisation.

Amongst the differences identified were: 1) Prejudices are much greater and more resistant to being addressed; 2) Health professionals and family carers have their respective inflexible attitudes – they constantly question the validity of the work; 3) Left-brain approaches are inappropriate - intuition and flexibility work best; 4) The idea of progression towards an end product may have to be set aside and the value of process be embraced; 5) Uncertainty and confusion may need to be accommodated; 6) Emotional expression has to be promoted in settings where this is often discouraged as disruptive.

Despite these differences, it was accepted that a skilled facilitator, with extensive experience of working in community settings, would be able to make a successful transition to working in the dementia field.

5. Personal Experience

There was a clear division between the two Roundtables as to whether personal experience of dementia was necessary or desirable for working in this field.

Amongst the members of the WR, there were more individuals with family experience and this led to a more forceful endorsement of prior knowledge. The view was expressed that this was highly motivating and gave insight into the range of challenges to be faced, as well as a depth of understanding which is hard to replicate in training. However, one participant found personal experience upsetting and inhibiting.

The contrary view – that a facilitator could be freer and share the moment with people with dementia if they had no personal experience – was predominant in the AR.

There was general agreement in both Roundtables that a certain level of training was essential, whatever one's previous history.

6. Values

A consensus was reached across the two Roundtables on the values that should be applied in this work.

The following were identified as essential for undertaking the work: 1) Promoting the person as their own advocate; 2) Accessing creativity as a sense-making tool; 3) Encouraging creativity as a trust-builder and a leveller; 4) Facilitating a re-engagement with wonder.

It was recognised that these often ran counter to the ethos of establishments and were not easily subject to evaluation.

Other points raised were: 1) Staff often had low morale which could sometimes be raised by offering opportunities to them to explore their own creativity; 2) There is currently a lack of assertion of the humane values of the work to counter the medicalised view of the person.

The need for guidelines for commissioners of projects, and for an advocacy leaflet for the work, was acknowledged.

7. Intents and Purposes

On the matter of the ways in which aims and objects affect ways of working and skillsets, here there was another clear distinction between the Roundtables.

The AR contained some therapists, and the WR did not, primarily because the profession of writing therapy hardly exists in the UK. The therapists had a growing research base, and clinical supervision and practice as part of their brief. Both groups needed to understand about dementia, and had respective training and development needs. They both had links to professional support, but in the case of the therapists, this was much more highly developed, and both had to adapt to respective care environments. Common ground between the two groups was referred to in the use of the terms 'reciprocity of process', 'engagement' and 'relationship'.

8. Different Settings

Looking at how working in different settings affects performance and ways of working, here again there was a contrast between the two Roundtables. There was a greater preponderance of hospital work in the AR group, and the severity of the limitations imposed by environments was stressed by them.

The great variety of settings in which people worked was emphasised: day centres, arts centres, care homes, hospitals, doctors' surgeries and people's own homes. Performance and ways of working were very much affected by these. Even within one category – hospitals – there was a big adjustment to be made in moving between an assessment and a long-stay ward. Amongst the variables, apart from ethos (perhaps the most significant of all) were physical facilities, availability of clients, and staff involvement. The opportunity to work in people's own homes was commended, because it 'equalises power and normalises the situation'; these are also the places where most clients are living. The importance of involving staff and/or relatives was reiterated.

9. Assessment

Both Roundtables agreed that evaluation was essential and had a number of purposes. It should be seen as part of a continual process, not as an add-on. The more objective aspects of an evaluation, however, were perhaps better accomplished by an external assessor. Although quantitative methods had their uses, the various qualitative approaches were more appropriate for arts projects and should be further developed; they are gradually becoming more accepted. The wellbeing scales from occupational therapy could be explored, and Newcastle University was developing a tool which combined monitoring and evaluation. One participant recommended the contributions of Peter Graf and Dalia Gottlieb Tanaka. Video evidence was advocated, but it was proving increasingly difficult to persuade ethics committees to accept such proposals. Reports should be framed in a more accessible

manner, and be more wide-ranging both in scope and distribution. It was recommended that assessment should be factored into project budgets.

10. Support

There was common ground between the two Roundtables as to the kinds of support needed, although the AR put more emphasis on emotional support than the WR. Two kinds of support were identified: the contextual and the personal. The former included: good project management; knowledge and training; and appreciation of the contexts in which work took place. The latter included: supervision and reflective practice; professional networks; artistic support; and resources, including remuneration that reflected the time and effort put in, materials and resources, and events and conferences.

There was widespread agreement that there should be an organization specifically responsible for the arts and dementia, which could provide administrative support and offer its members tangible benefits such as quality assurance, guidelines on practice, networks offering opportunities for sharing, and with the possibility for such adjuncts as public liability insurance. NAWE already offered some of these services to its members, and was prepared to offer further support to members of the WR and their colleagues, but it was agreed that this should not preclude their joining a body devoted to a wider spectrum of the arts and dementia community. It was proposed that the Association for Dementia Studies at the University of Worcester would be best placed to provide this service.

11. Training

Both Roundtables accepted that there was an overwhelming need for training in this area, delivered by a variety of methods – through a long course, short courses, on-line and through mentoring. They both agreed that the main provision should be a one-year diploma, shared with artists of all art forms, which could consist of core elements supplemented by units for specific art forms. There should also be short courses, day or weekend or on-line, which would not be certificated. The courses should be delivered by practitioners, people with dementia and carers. Bursaries should be available for all strands.

An extensive list of possible components of training courses was drawn up, including: shadowing; mentoring; reflections on practice; skills, methods and approaches; information about dementia; details of academic research and papers; placements and follow-ups; listening skills and empathy; and exploring and signing up to core values, such as respect for the person, confidentiality and being non-judgemental. There could be a core module of: finance/budgeting/fundraising; relevant legislation; understanding how institutions work; group dynamics/facilitation; and ethics.

There was general resistance to the inclusion of an element of counselling/therapeutic training. Two of the artists recommended an 'instant ageing' workshop. Meeting other

artists for 'cross fertilisation' was supported. Regular gatherings like the Roundtables were unanimously endorsed.

Again NAWE could offer some of the above, and Worcester University was the favoured institution to provide comprehensive training.

12. Standards

The need for clarifying standards was agreed; this would be of particular use to those new to the work. The general view was that provision of the various forms of support outlined under 7 would result in the raising of the status of the work, and the meeting of the training needs outlined under 8 would result in greater consistency; taken together these would achieve the aim of establishing standards. One participant summed up the overall aim of the work as 'creating value in terms of what we do and the impact on those we work with.'

Some Quotations from the Roundtables

'I'm not coming in to entertain the troops or be a baby-sitter.'

'The world is a symphony not a spreadsheet.'

'You need to turn off your own ego.'

'We are trying to demonstrate flow: what creativity is really like.'

'It can be dangerous if we are aligned too closely with the work of occupational therapists -they bring in rabbits one week, clowns the next!'

'In working with people with dementia we must try to inhabit their internal landscape.'

'How do you create a network around yourself?'

'How do you measure a smile, and why would you want to?'

13. Recommendations

It was the general view of the Roundtables that there was common ground in terms of attitude, experience and need. This would enable a single approach to be made to the devising of a document outlining standards, and the establishment of a training course with attendant qualification. Any divergencies could be accommodated by means of supplementary provision.

Networking

That regular meetings of writers and artists working in the field should take place to combat isolation and promote innovative practices. Other forms of peer support would contribute to this end (see 5).

Support

That a body for support should be established, which would raise the profile of the work, set standards, and provide training opportunities. NAWE can do some of this for writers; the Association of Dementia Studies at the University of Worcester could be approached to do this for all concerned.

Research

That there should be more research in this area, especially of a qualitative nature; this would establish tools for evaluation for both writers and artists to use.

Resources

That there should be guidelines issued for writers and artists, and also for commissioners, and there should also be an advocacy leaflet for the work. (NAWE is already offering a whole issue of its journal 'Writing in Education' to be devoted to writing and dementia).

Training

That courses should be instituted - a one year across-the-arts course leading to a diploma, with short courses covering specific art-forms or aspects of the work, which would be non-certificated, in order to raise standards and confer status on the sector. Bursaries should be available for these.

In addition, opportunities should be created for writers and artists in the field to collaborate with, and shadow and mentor each other.

Appendix 1

Briefing Paper Working as an artist with people with dementia

John Killick

This briefing paper is based on a short survey of arts and dementia activity and research in the UK undertaken by leading arts and dementia writer John Killick. It has been commissioned by NAWE (National Association of Writers in Education) which has received funding to run an Artists Laboratory exploring the knowledge and skills needed by artists in the UK to work with people with dementia. This forms part of NAWE's work with a larger project ArtWorks, a three-year Special Initiative being delivered by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to support the continuing professional development of artists working in participatory settings.

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Part One: Introduction

We know a great deal about the generic skills, knowledge and understanding needed for working as an artist in participatory settings, as well as the values to be applied, and the learning pathways for such artists, but there are still gaps in our knowledge concerning practice differences.

In the NAWE lab we shall look at two areas of activity concerned with the arts and people with dementia: those involving writers, and those involving artists in other media, and the broad range of settings in which those activities take place. We will investigate the range of skills necessary for the successful completion of work in these areas, and the different purposes of the work.

The outcome of this lab will be learning around working as an artist with people with dementia, focusing in particular on the commonalities and differences between art forms, resulting in recommendations for training, qualifications and standards.

Methodology: Two roundtables have been convened to fulfil this brief, one made up of writers, and the other of artists in other media; this briefing paper is going to both. Participants will be invited to make provocations (brief presentations) on selected topics. The discussions will be recorded, and a summary of the key discussion points will be sent to all participants. A report making recommendations for training, qualifications and standards will be available at the end of the year and will be circulated widely. John Killick has been commissioned to write the briefing paper and report, as well as chair the roundtables.

Part Two: Snapshot of the current state of the arts and dementia in the UK

a) Activity

- (i) **General:** Over the last fifteen years there has been a steady increase in the number and variety of projects involving people with dementia in artistic activities, and this trend is continuing. The vast majority of these have been concerned with art and/or crafts, or music, but there are also significant initiatives involving dance, drama and creative writing. An example of the former would be Music for Life, which has been bringing interactive music to groups in communal settings for most of this period. An example of the latter would be Chaturangan which is currently offering the experience of South Indian Dance to groups in Merseyside. There are also some combined arts projects, and intergenerational ones. The scene, after a tentative start, is looking increasingly healthy. (Details of these and other initiatives can be found in Appendix 1).

The geographical spread is uneven, with the larger conurbations (such as the London area and Tyneside) claiming the most, and there are still areas of the UK such as Northern Ireland where little seems to be happening. The Alzheimer's Society's successful programme 'Singing for the Brain' has swiftly spread throughout the UK.

Otherwise, most initiatives are small-scale and local, and there is little connection between them.

One publication *The Journal of Dementia Care* has worked tirelessly to highlight successful work and give practical advice over the period, and two organizations (Creative Dementia Arts Network and Arts 4 Dementia) have been founded in the past year with the aim of bringing practitioners together, but there are still far too few opportunities for sharing insights.

As many as eighteen books on creative approaches have become available in this country in the last five years. Some of these are the product of projects, some cover specific art forms, and two (those by Lee and Adams, and Killick and Craig) attempt to be comprehensive. (Details can be found in Appendix 3 along with articles which have appeared in the JDC over the last five years).

- (ii) **Aims:** Projects can have a number of purposes: (i) artistic (ii) social (iii) clinical (iv) therapeutic. For example, a visual art project where the outcome would be an exhibition would be (i). A project which aimed at integration with the local community would be (ii). A project where the aim was to reduce drug use would be (iii). A project whose purpose was to assist with diagnosis would be (iv). Many projects would, of course, fall into more than one of these categories.
- (iii) **Artists:** As far as we know, artists working in the field come from a variety of backgrounds, with a similar disparity in levels of experience and training. The team of professional performers that deliver Hearts and Minds' 'Elderflowers' programme with elderly people with in Scotland, for example, come from backgrounds in acting, clowning, physical theatre and classical mime as well as directing, teaching and facilitating. They receive specific training to work in healthcare environments with vulnerable people. (You can meet the team at <http://www.heartsandminds.org.uk/elderflowers-meet.html>). Artists involved in the majority of action research projects with older people with dementia run by engage Cymru received awareness training from the Alzheimer's Society and Bangor University Dementia Research Department. We know that arts therapists will have had a high level of training. Some artists who have an extensive nursing background will have medical knowledge beyond the average, but they may also have absorbed attitudes and practices which could set them aside from other creative people. We have no idea of the number of artists involved.
- (iv) **Client Groups:** These can include family carers, staff, other professionals, as well as people with dementia. A project may include training the staff to carry on the work, for example. Another one may include family carers alongside people with dementia.
- (v) **Settings:** These can include day centres, residential and nursing homes, doctors' surgeries, hospital wards, arts centres and individuals' own homes. Some art forms may not be appropriate for certain settings. Some clients may not be able to move out of the setting in which they are accommodated. In some settings or projects it may be appropriate to work one-to-one; in others in groups; and in some, both approaches may be possible.

- (vi) **Employers:** These can include, as well as the places of work, universities, charities, theatre companies and arts councils.
- (vii) **Funders:** These can be arts councils, social services, and especially charitable foundations such as Baring, Esmée Fairbairn and Paul Hamlyn.

b) Training

Artists working in participatory settings can access training from various organizations such as NAWÉ, organized according to specific art forms. There are national occupational standards (NOS) in dance leadership and one in participatory arts leadership is under development (NOS describe what a competent person working in the field needs to know and understand, and what they need to be able to do) and codes of practice in music education, community dance and the visual arts (a code of practice sets out how a practitioner should behave). None of these specifically refer to dementia work.

In the dementia field, some training is offered in certain locations by individual organizations.

There are no agreed standards and there is no coordination. Here are some examples:

- * **Alzheimer's Society offers a one-day workshop in dementia awareness. Participants who have completed this can go on to sit the Alzheimer's Society Foundation Certificate in Dementia Awareness.**
- * **Arts 4 Dementia, in collaboration with Dementia UK, offers half-day courses for artists and volunteers.**
- * **Bangor University, North Wales, in collaboration with Ty Newydd (the Welsh Writers Centre) and Dementia Services Development Centre, Wales, is setting up a training programme for writers this year which will be followed by similar programmes for artists in other art forms.**
- * **Courtyard Arts Centre, Hereford is training writers to work in the community through an ongoing mentoring scheme.**
- * **Cornerhouse and Library Theatre Company, Manchester, with funds from Paul Hamlyn Foundation and in collaboration with the Alzheimer's Society, will be offering training to artists for its storytelling through drama project. (They also hope to develop an evaluation framework with Manchester University.)**
- * **Equal Arts in Gateshead offers training to artists and volunteers who work in its schemes.**
- * **European Reminiscence Network has a 2-day training scheme for facilitators and a pilot apprenticeship scheme in Reminiscence Arts in Dementia Care in October 2012 in partnership with the University of Greenwich and the University of Bradford.**
- * **Jabadao offer a bespoke one-day staff training course entitled 'Meeting Beyond Words'.**

c) Research

There is a dearth of research in Arts and Dementia. This may reflect the difficulty in carrying it out. It may also be the result of the predominance of the medical in this funding area. Here are some examples of what has been attempted and what is ongoing:

- * **Music for Life (in collaboration with Dementia UK) has completed a research project on reflective practice, creative music-making, learning and dementia awareness. The researchers were Dr Rineke Smilde, Leader of the Lifelong Learning in Music in the Arts Research Group, Hanze University, Groningen and Professor Peter Alheit, University of Grottingen. Take a look at www.wigmore-hall.org.uk**
- * **Paul Camic at Canterbury University has completed a pilot study on 'Does a 'Singing Together Group' improve the quality of life of people with dementia and their carers?' Dementia October 2011. Find out through www.sagepub.com**
- * **Hearthstone Care (USA) in collaboration with Chris Gage of Ladder to the Moon is running a major study in the States called 'Whose Shoes?' It is just entering its second phase and involves 450 participants over 18 sites. See www.laddertothemoon.co.uk**
- * **Kate Allan has begun a PHD on Flow and Dementia, and is particularly interested in how the arts can give people with dementia peak experiences. More information on www.dementiapositive.co.uk**
- * **Bangor University (Gill Windle); Manchester Met University Arts for Health (Clive Parkinson) and Newcastle University New Dynamics of Ageing (Andrew Newman and Anna Goulding) have submitted a bid to AHRC for a 36-month project (decision due end of this year).**
- * **The Newcastle Initiative on Changing Age at Newcastle University is undertaking the study 'Ageing Creatively' exploring the relation of creative arts interventions to wellbeing in later life. Find out more at [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/changing age/research/projects/ageingcreatively.htm](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/changing%20age/research/projects/ageingcreatively.htm)**

Part Three: Areas for Discussion

1) Knowledge

- * What kinds of knowledge do we need as writers/artists in order to work with people with dementia?
- * How best can we gain this knowledge?
- * Is working with people with dementia different from working with other groups in the community, and if so, in what ways?
- * Do we need to have a background of working in the community or in health and social care?
- * Do we need to have a personal experience of dementia?
- * What facts do we need to know about dementia?
- * What are the key gaps in our knowledge in this field?
- * Do writers experience this kind of work differently from other artists?

2) Values

- * What values should we be applying in this work?
- * Should the values be specific to this field or shared with other fields?
- * Need they be the same as those which apply in the settings where we work?
- * How are we to apply these values in assessing our work?

3) Skills and Settings

- * What skills do we need as writers/artists for working in these settings?
- * To what extent are these skills specific to the field of arts and dementia?
- * How best can we gain/develop these skills?
- * How does working in different settings affect our performance and/or ways of working?
- * What kinds of support do we need?
- * What would help us work more effectively in this field?
- * How are we to evaluate our contributions?

4) Conclusions

What are our recommendations for writers/artists working in this field in terms of:

- (i) Training
- (ii) Qualifications
- (iii) Standards

Appendix 2: Arts and Dementia Activity in the UK

Multi Arts

Artlink Central

Cowane Centre, Cowane, Stirling FK8 1JP

Arts and disability, health and prisons in Central Scotland. Dementia Training Handbook available to download.

Contact: Kevin Harrison Tel: 01786 450971 Email: info@artlinkcentral.org

Website: www.artlinkcentral.org

Artlink West Yorkshire

191 Belle Vue Road, Leeds LS3 1HG

The Living Story – two projects with male and female patients in dementia wards. Book available to buy.

Contact: Dianne Darby Tel: 0113 2431005 Email: info@artlinkwestyorks.org

Website: www.artlinkwestyorks.org

Arts 4 Dementia

20 Charlwood Road, London SW15 1PE

Various arts initiatives in the London area and some training.

Contact: Veronica Franklin Gould Tel: 020 8780 5217 Email: info@arts4dementia.org.uk

Website: www.arts4dementia.org.uk

Collective Encounters

Liverpool Hope University, 17 Shaw Street, Everton, Liverpool L6 1HP

'Live and Learn' dementia programme based in North Liverpool. Audio material online.

Contact: Sarah Thornton Tel: 0151 291 3887 Email: info@collective-encounters.org.uk

Website: www.collective-encounters.org.uk

Entelechy Arts

The Albany, Douglas Way, London SE8 4AG

Pioneering multi-arts based company working nationally and internationally

Contact: David Slater or Lou Errington: Email: lou.errington@entelechyarts.org

Website: www.entelechyarts.org

Equal Arts

Swinburne House, Swinburne Street, Gateshead NE8 1AX

Offers a wide variety of art forms in a range of social and health settings in the North East of England. Regular newsletter.

Contact: Alice Thwaite Tel: 0191 477 5775 Email: information@equalarts.org.uk

Website: www.equalarts.org.uk

Innovations in Dementia

PO Box 616, Exeter EX1 9JB

DVDs made with people with dementia. Guide on filmmaking to download.

DVDs to view online.

Contact: Steve Milton Tel: 01392 420076 Email: steve@innovationsindementia.org.uk

Website: www.innovationsindementia.org.uk

Magic Me

18 Victoria Park Square, London E2 9PF

Intergenerational projects. Newsletter available.

Contact: Susan Langford Tel: 020 32222 6064 Email: info@magicme.co.uk

Website: www.magicme.co.uk

Pictures to Share

Century House, High Street, Tattenhall, Chester CH3 9PX

Books specially designed for people with dementia. Catalogue available. Short DVDs can be viewed online. A user guide can also be downloaded.

Contact: Helen Bate Tel: 01829 770 024 Email: helen@picturestoshare.co.uk

Website: www.picturestoshare.co.uk

Sandwell Third Age Arts

9th Floor West Plaza, 144 High Street, West Bromwich, West Midlands B70 6JJ

Variety of art-forms offered to individuals and groups.

DVD of a project 'Fountain's Jolly Inn' can be viewed on line. DVD 'Art for the Person's Sake' available on request.

Contact: Sharon Baker Tel: 0121 500 1259 Email: info@staa.org.uk

Website: home.btconnect.com/sandwellcct/staa/

Pontio Project

Main Arts Building, Bangor University, College Road, Bangor LL57 2DG

New arts centre currently developing participatory programme with a focus on dementia.

Contact: Jerry Hunter Tel: 01248 351151 Email: wesc02@bangor.ac.uk

Website: www.pontio.co.uk

Creative Writing/Reading

Courtyard Centre for the Arts

Edgar Street, Hereford HR4 9JR

Poetry in dementia project in partnership with Ledbury Poetry Festival, funded by Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and Hereford Council.

Contact: Alice Saunders Email: alice.saunders@courtyard.org.uk

Website: www.courtyard.org.uk

New Writing North

Holy Jesus Hospital, City Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 2AS

'What about me' dementia and creative writing project to better understand the science and experience of living with dementia. Run in partnership with the Changing Age team at Newcastle University, Alzheimer's Society and Age UK Newcastle. Currently exploring scope for further work around this.

Contact: Anna Disley Tel: 0191 233 3850 Email: anna@newwritingnorth.com

Website: <http://www.newwritingnorth.com/communities-writers-in-communities-the-dementia-project-page-2134.html>

<http://nwncommunities.wordpress.com/>

The Reader Organisation

The Friary Centre, Bute Street, Liverpool L5 3LA

Get Into Reading groups in care homes for the elderly and those living with dementia across the UK. Open and commissioned training.

Contact: Katie Clark, Older People's Project Manager (on maternity leave, back December 2012 – locum, Emma Gibbons) Tel: 0151 2077207 Email: info@thereader.org.uk

Website: <http://thereader.org.uk>

Dance

Chaturangan

10 Awelon Close, West Derby, Liverpool L12 5JY

South Asian Dance – health and wellbeing initiatives with particular focus on older people.

Contact: Bisakha Sarker Tel: 07850 127823 Email: bisakha@blueyonder.co.uk

Website: www.chaturangan.co.uk

Circle Dance in Dementia

DVDs to view online. Commissioned training.

Contact: Kath Kershaw or Cynthia Heymanson Email: kath.kershaw@hotmail.co.uk

Website: www.circledanceindementia.com

Green Candle Dance Company

Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, Bethnal Green, London E2 6HG

A community and education dance company

Contact: Fergus Early Tel: 0207 739 7722 Email: info@greencandle.com

Website: www.greencandle.com

Jabadao

Robin Lane Health Wellbeing and Medical Centre, Robin Lane, Pudsey, Leeds LS28 7DE
Movement play specialists promoting physical communication through playful interaction.
Bespoke training offered. DVD can be viewed online.

Contact: Penny Greenland Tel: 0113 236 3311 Email: info@jabadao.org

Website: www.jabadao.org

Drama/Film

Age Exchange

11 Blackheath Village, London SE3 9LA

Reminiscence theatre and creative activities. Training courses and publications.

Contact: Craig Muir Tel: 020 8318 9105 Email: administrator@age-exchange.org.uk

Website: www.age-exchange.org.uk

CIRCA Connect

School of Computing, University of Dundee, Dundee DD1 4HN

Exploring ways in which computer-based technologies can help support people living with dementia. 'Living in the Moment' touchscreen entertainment complex available to buy.

Contact: Norman Alm Tel: 01382 385596 Email: nalm@computing.dundee.ac.uk

Website: www.circaconnect.co.uk

Cornerhouse & Library Theatre Company

70 Oxford Street, Manchester M1 5NH

Storybox – three-year project using drama and storytelling to engage older people with dementia. Run in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society with funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Contact: Lowri Evans, Storybox Project Coordinator Tel: 0161 200 1533

Email: lowri@librarytheatre.com

Website: <http://www.librarytheatre.com/project/storybox>

Hearts & Minds

The Canon Mill, Canon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5HE

Elderflowers Project – interactive humour in hospital settings with elderly people with dementia. DVD available for sale.

Contact: Magdalena Schamberger Tel: 0131 270 6051 Email: enquiries@heartsminds.org.uk

Website: www.heartsminds.org.uk

Ladder to the Moon

Branch Hill House, Branch Hill, Hampstead London NW3 7LS

Relationship theatre to improve the quality of care services. DVD material can be viewed online.

Contact: Chris Gage Tel: 020 7794 2593 Email: chris@laddertothemoon.co.uk

Website: www.laddertothemoon.co.uk

Salmagundi Films

The Studio, 44 Forest Lane, London E15 1HA

Using Stop Frame Animation to engage people living with people. DVD extracts can be viewed online.

Contact: Zoe Flynn or Bo Chapman Tel: 0208 519 0143 Email: studio@salmagundi.co.uk

Website: <http://www.salmagundifilms.co.uk/#Working-with-Dementia>

Music

Barchester Music Therapy

A healthcare company offers music therapy with 13 therapists working in 25 homes.

Contact: Stuart Wood Email: stuartwood@gmail.com

Website: www.barchester.com/media/news/2009/6/music-therapy-reveals-the-creativity-in-people-htm

Harmony

The Avenue, Drygrange, Melrose, Scottish Borders TD6 9DH

Gives concerts in 100 venues once a month. Video on YouTube.

Contact: Violet Baillie or Jim Smith Tel: 01896 849778

Email: harmonyharmony@btinternet.com

Website: www.bowden.bordernet.co.uk

Lost Chord

The Wesley Centre, Blyth Rd, Maltby, Rotherham S66 8JD

Concerts in care homes in South Yorkshire. DVD material available online.

Contact: Helena Muller Tel: 01709 811160 Email: helena@lostchord.fsnet.co.uk

Website: www.lost-chord.org.uk

Music For Life

Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore Street, London W1U 2BP

A collaboration between Dementia UK and the Wigmore Hall offering live music in residential homes, hospitals and day centres.

Contact: Elizabeth McCall, Head of Learning Tel: 020 7258 8241

Email: emccall@wigmore-hall.org.uk

Website: <http://www.dementiauk.org/what-we-do/learning-partnerships-and-training/learning-partnerships/music-for-life/>

Singing for the Brain

Service provided by the Alzheimer's Society in locations across England, Wales and Northern Ireland which uses singing to bring people together in a friendly and stimulating social environment.

Website: <http://alzheimers.org.uk/singingforthebrain>

Sing for your Life

Shepway Business Centre, Shearway Business Park, Folkestone, CT19 4RH

Improving the health and wellbeing of older people through music. Runs Silver Song Clubs across England. There is a DVD online.

Contact: Adrian Bawtree Tel: 01303 298546 Email: adrian@singforyourlife.org.uk

Website: www.singforyourlife.org.uk

Turtle Key Arts

Ladbroke Hall, 79 Barlby Road, London W10 6AZ

Mounts performance arts projects with emphasis on disabled, disadvantaged or socially excluded people. 'Turtle Song' is a collaboration with English Touring Opera and the Royal College of Music in the making of a song cycle.

Contact: Charlotte Cunningham Tel: 020 8964 4080 Email: charlotte@turtlekeyarts.org.uk

Website: www.turtlekeyarts.org.uk

Visual/Applied Arts

Art in Hospitals

Blawarthill Hospital, 129 Holehouse Drive, Glasgow G13 3TG

Provides an extensive programme of visual arts in a variety of healthcare settings in the city of Glasgow and Scotland-wide, working especially in long-term care for older people. Exhibitions and publications available.

Contact: Barbara Gulliver Tel: 0141 211 9031 Email: info@artinhospital.org

Website: www.artinhospital.org

engage Cymru

34 Dewing Avenue, Manorbier, Pembrokeshire, SA70 7TS

The UK's leading membership organisation for gallery education. Has run a number of Wales-wide action research projects focusing on older people with dementia in care homes, assessment units in hospitals, and galleries. Evaluation report 'Quality of Silence' available at [www.engage.org/downloads/OP Research Report English.pdf](http://www.engage.org/downloads/OP%20Research%20Report%20English.pdf).

Contact: Angela Rogers Tel: 01834 870121 Email: cymru@engage.org

Website: www.engage.org

Appendix 3: Umbrella Organizations

Arts 4 Dementia

Forum for arts and dementia in London area

Contact: Veronica Franklin Gould, 20 Charlwood Road, London SW15 1PE

Tel: 020 8780 5217 Email: info@arts4dementia.org.uk

Website: www.arts4dementia.org.uk

Arts and Dementia Network

Forum for arts and dementia in the North East of England

Contact: Ruth Abbott, Equal Arts, Swinburne House, Swinburne Street, Gateshead NE8 1AX

Tel: 0191 477 5775 Email: ruth@equalarts.org.uk

Website: www.equalarts.org.uk

Centre of Excellence in Movement, Dance and Dementia

Aims to equip health professionals and others working in dementia care with the knowledge and skills necessary to explore and develop the use of movement and dance

Contact: Richard Coaten Tel: 01422 385775 Email: richard.coaten@swyt.nhs.uk

Website: www.dancedementiahub.co.uk (under construction)

Creative Dementia Arts Network

Works to promote participation in the arts for people with dementia in care homes and community through providing information, training, consultancy and research services for both commissioners and arts providers

Contact: Maria Parsons Tel: 07801 509993 Email: info@creativementia.org

Website: www.creativedementia.org

European Reminiscence Network

15 Camden Row, Blackheath, London SE3 OQA

Creative approaches to reminiscence. Offers training in reminiscence arts in dementia care.

Contact: Pam Schweitzer Tel: 020 8852 9293 Email: pam@pamschweitzer.com

Website: www.europeanreminiscencenetwork.org

Society for the Arts in Dementia Care, Canada

Contact: Dalia Gottlieb-Tanaka, Chair Email: info@cecd-society.org

Website: www.cecd-society.org

UK contact: Association for Dementia Studies, Institute of Health and Society, University of Worcester, St John's Campus, Henwick Grove, Worcester WR2 6AJ

Aims to become the centre for excellence for arts work in the UK.

Contact: Karan Jutlla Tel: 01905 855250 Email: k.jutlla@worc.ac.uk

Website: www.worc.ac.uk/discover/association-for-dementia-studies

Websites

Age of Creativity

A platform for anything and everything that can inspire, inform and support art projects for older people

Website: www.ageofcreativity.co.uk

Dementia Positive

Encouraging communication, consultation and creativity in work with people who have dementia

Contact: John Killick or Kate Allan Tel: 07971 041844 or 07971 170243

Email: johnkillick@dementiapositive.co.uk or kateallan@dementiapositive.co.uk

Website: www.dementiapositive.co.uk

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- Heathcote J. (2008) *Memories are made of this: reminiscence activities for person-centred care* Alzheimer's Society
- Hayes K., Aylwin R. (2008) *Only Just Orchid* (poems) Margent
- Schweitzer P. Bruce E. (2008) *Remembering Yesterday, Caring Today* Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Basting A.D. (2009) *Forget Memory: Creating better lives for people with dementia* John Hopkins University
- Killick J. (2009) *The Elephant in the Room* (poems) Cambridgeshire County Council
- Whitman L. (2009) *Telling Tales about dementia: experiences of caring* Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Rio R. (2009) *Connecting through music with people with dementia: a guide for caregivers* Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Zeisel J. (2010) *I'm Still Here: A breakthrough approach to understanding someone living with Alzheimer's* Piatkus
- Zoutewelle-Morris S. (2011) *Chocolate Rain: 100 ideas for a creative approach to activities in dementia care* Hawker
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Practice articles from the Journal of Dementia Care since 2007

(The *Journal of Dementia Care* is the leading journal for professionals working with people with dementia. Details of how to subscribe and buy individual articles at: <http://www.careinfo.org/journal-of-dementia-care/uk-jdc-subscriptions/>)

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- Clegg D. (2007) *The Trebus Archive: piercing the fragments together* 15(3)
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- Rose L. et al (2008) *Music for Life: a model for reflective process* 16(3)
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Artists' Lab Report:

Employing community musicians

– Sound Sense

Kathryn Deane

May 2013

1. Background

The generic skills, knowledge and understanding, behaviours and values needed to work as an artist in participatory settings have been described consistently for more than two decades now (see eg Keith 1992); and there is similar broad understanding of the range of learning pathways for such artists (see eg any issue of *Sounding Board* from Spring 1990). But there are still gaps in our knowledge, around the demand side (how do employers of artists hire?) and in practice differences (are the commonalities between the different axes around which participatory work revolve overwhelmed by the differences?)

Having consulted with its board practitioners, Sound Sense's contribution to filling this gap was to run a "demand-side" lab asking of employers (also known as commissioners, or hirers):

“Can you get the quality of community musicians you want: if so how do you do this (eg by recommendation, by qualification, by training them yourself); if not, what professional development would be required to get you what you want?”

Any discussion of quality in participatory practice (see Context, below) in England needs to take account of Arts Council England's work on the quality of arts work with children and young people (arts Council England 2013a). Participatory work and funding in England is skewed towards children and young people: it is an ACE priority (Arts Council England 2013b); and in music Youth Music, which funds participatory projects, has lottery income of £10m a year.

Most pertinently ACE and Creative and Cultural Skills (CCSkills, the relevant sector skills agency) are developing a new qualification for music educators, the level 4 certificate for music educators (Arts Council England 2013c). Partly for the reasons in the previous paragraph, partly because it was a key recommendation of the Henley review of music education (Henley 2011:26), this was drafted largely through the lens of work with children and young people – even though the language is attempting to be as versatile as possible (Sound Sense sat on the working group drafting the qualification). Awarding organisations are expected to be able to offer the qualification sometime after autumn 2013.

2. Methodology

The original intention of the Sound Sense lab was to carry out one or two rounds of expert questioning by email preparatory to a face to face meeting for a limited number of those experts. Results from the expert questioning, however, were so clear-cut it was considered that a face-to-face meeting would add little to the knowledge gained, so this element was discontinued.

The method of expert questioning used was a type of “Delphi technique”, see eg http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delphi_method . Experts were asked to “respond to the four questions ... This isn't a survey, it's a dialogue, so please feel free to expand as much as you need on your answers – even reframe them, if it'll help – the prompts below each question are just jumping-off points for you to think about.”

We had around 38 responses from a longlist of 174 (22% response) Sound Sense members who might possibly hire: 11 didn't hire, a couple provided helpful but not full responses, leaving around two-dozen substantive answers (which the rest of this summary refers to). Responses were made mostly in August 2012, with a few in September.

The responses were collated and sent back to the respondents together with a further set of four questions, picking up on issues raised in the first round responses. Twelve responses were received from the list of 23 (52% response) Sound Sense members who had provided substantive answers to the round 1 questions. Responses were made between early November and mid-December 2012. Questions in the two rounds are shown in appendix 1

The Delphi technique has a number of advantages over straight, even open-ended, questionnaires:

- * **The style of questioning, with prompts (see appendix 1), encourages discursive answers that go to the heart of what concerns the expert**
- * **For the questioner, the ability to go back to the experts to ask “what did you mean by . . .” provides richer data**
- * **For the experts, the ability to see what other experts think on a topic sharpens their own thinking and allows for adjustment in responses.**

Responses were received overwhelmingly from organisations and venues doing community-music type work; four others were more music or education facilities, two were ungroupable. Only two were primarily non-music organisations: one a support organisation for those with a learning disability, the other essentially a hospital. While this may seem methodologically limiting, it reflects the reality for most community musicians being hired; and the answers from the two non-music organisations were congruent with the majority – giving some assurance that the sample is reasonably typical.

3. Context – and intents and purposes

Community music (and therefore the hirers of community musicians) form a very broad practice, impossible to define, and nearly as impossible to describe, in any universally agreed way. There have been a number of attempts at definitions over the years – which won't be repeated here, if only because they are largely ignored in practice. Similarly, there are ways of describing the work, such as the body of work in the UK journal of community music *Sounding Board* – but this is bound to be a partial and self-referential view of the market place (though of course one that Sound Sense would completely endorse). At the least

common denominator, it is a “participatory practice” in Paul Hamlyn Foundation’s definition (“Participatory Practice therefore means the artist’s practice which occurs when working with participants as opposed to their studio practice”).

Definitions and descriptions matter only if the answers you get to questions you pose differ depending on what definition or description is in play. The baseline assertion of this lab is that the axis most likely to cause differential responses is the intent and purpose of the work, rather than, say, the client group or the setting. (As an example: a community musician could work with young people, in school, to help them with an A level composition project, or to explore homophobia, or to get them off drugs: the client group and setting is the same in each case, but the specifics of what a hirer might need of their musician for the different purpose of the different cases might vary a lot.) In other words, it’s about the extent to which “community” in “community music” is important.

We identified three types of intent and purpose in the work: where the focus was on the music itself (styled here “music first”); where the music was important, but recognised how it would lead to personal, social, or community development (“music+”); where the focus was on personal, social, or community development, with the music as a vehicle to deliver this (“development”).

This is a rough categorisation, and other distributions can be argued for. But the sample contains almost 50% music+ organisations:

“high quality music opportunities ... with an emphasis on those who are experiencing barriers to accessing music. Our work covers the whole spectrum of musical and social interventions”

Rather fewer development organisations:

“it can be curriculum (but usually in this case we’d be working with young people who are not meeting the standards of their peers), or a social justice purpose (that the group are denied these opportunities in mainstream) or a socialising purpose (to re engage with learning)”

And fewer again music first organisations (and two of those could be argued into music+):

“children and young people in schools (with arts as part of the curriculum), young people in informal learning (weekend and holiday courses), ... adult learners, and family learning”

In other words, for almost all organisations answering, the music is important – but equally, so are personal, social, or community developments in the participants.

We’ve noted the very few places where we think answers to the remaining questions vary according to type of intent and purpose.

4. What is quality

We've picked out this prompt because of the high number of respondents specifically addressing the point. Very roughly speaking, one can see a spectrum of a definition of "quality" depending on intent of the work. So, for music first organisations, musical skills are prioritised:

“high quality music making and creation – by this we mean participants being involved in the creative process, good quality singing (if singing is a part of the project), ensemble playing”

For the development organisations there's more emphasis on non-musical attributes, including understanding the context and the people, knowing what style of facilitation to adopt. The musical attributes are still important but are framed in this context:

“musicians who have ideas for group activities for a range of ages and abilities up their sleeves as flexibility is essential in our groups. They also need to be able to manage a group of people with learning difficulties and also have some experience in supporting non musical volunteers to work with in the groups as well. They also need a sense of fun and energy and enthusiasm”

“excellent skills in engaging challenging/chaotic clients and also excellent skills in music technology”

Musically, key words include versatile and musicianship. But whatever the intent and purpose, there's an emphasis on soft skills, with respondents using words like humble, passionate, ethical, committed; and there was a concern about how far these qualities would be able to be assessed in a qualification.

5. Recruiting quality community musicians

By and large, responders were experienced in hiring community musicians. Yet more than half said they had problems in recruiting. This finding needs to be treated with caution, however: it doesn't suggest that this half can never recruit – indeed, in a couple of cases respondents gave examples of both successful and unsuccessful recruiting, while others gave examples of how they had addressed problems in recruitment. But it does indicate that, even for experienced employers, recruiting can be tricky.

There is perhaps more of a problem finding people with the right **personal and soft skills** than with the right musical skills:

“Generally, it is easier to find musicians who can teach ‘musical’ skills but lack experience in pedagogy, classroom management, communications etc. It is also more difficult to find musicians who are able to work with young people in extreme challenging circumstances”

“one really nice guy ran a workshop for group of adults with learning disabilities but wanted them to count and come in at a certain number – yes, well, many of them couldn't count, it took quite a while for him to realise this”

Most organisations were able to overcome recruitment issues using a mixture of approaches. There's almost universal (whatever the intent and purpose of the work) use of either personal recommendation or **observation of practice** followed by a trial period, eg an extended audition, or quasi-apprenticeship or trainee scheme; or else grow-your-own schemes:

“Nearly all through recommendation followed by information about the person's work from other professionals (and sometimes direct from young people). Then trial in practical context, often as assistant leader.”

“We have recruited through open recruitment and through musicians approaching us direct. Both work. We employ them as trainee where they shadow senior musicians, and the senior musician mentoring them through assisting and leading workshops and projects. Once established they may attend external training events etc”

“We've now got enormous knowledge of the musicians working right across the county. Supply isn't an issue – we get lots of offers and approaches. However, because of the nature of our client groups, we'd be VERY UNLIKELY to offer work to someone unless we'd seen them in action first. We might start by offering someone a shadowing or assisting role short term to see what they were like. If people are recommended to us (by people we know and trust), we would still want to see them first.”

Observation as a recruiting tool was robustly justified, even though it might be a relatively expensive method compared with, say, interview. It was compared to auditioning actors or seeing a band before hiring them for a gig, or to Ofsted observations of teachers. Or – by two separate respondents – to seeing architect's models or previous buildings. The process needed to be to be thought-through, however:

“We recognise [the issues]. It can drag out the recruitment process considerably, and in some circumstances means you need a group of guinea pig users for the candidates to work with (in this circumstance we'd always include the users in the decision-making process). However, our justification would be 1) that our music leaders are largely working unsupervised (ie there's no-one in the room with them, not that we don't manage them), may be working alone, and may be working remotely, and short of offering them the contract and then going to watch the first session, we can't be sure that their skills are what is needed unless we see them. 2) that we may be putting them in front of children in challenging circumstances, and we don't want to bring in an element of disturbance which might come with changing a music leader after a few weeks or months. People want work – that sometimes means they view their own skills and abilities optimistically”

A few respondents mentioned video as a compromise (though creating good quality video and knowing what to watch for when reviewing it are additional skills community musicians and employers would then need to acquire):

“Practice can be observed and assessed on video with pretty much the same accuracy as live. I speak from many years of assessing work done internationally. This puts the onus on the music leader to produce a real looking video of their work and observing this can’t be that much more expensive than other recruitment approaches.”

Some respondents picked up on the prompt on **inclusivity**. Community musicians are hard-wired to worry about inclusivity in the work they do; and in turn employers worry about inclusivity in their hiring practices – though not enough, it seems:

“I wonder if the bottom line is that we do all have a little black book which we resort to that has been built up over years, and is primarily based on our experience of the musician/ artist within their own contexts. The reality is that this has never been an inclusive book. In fact far from it – it is quite elitist.”

“Inclusiveness – this is tricky. It can be such a closed network. I am receptive to [practitioners] getting in touch if they can invite me to see something. Perhaps we could look at ways in which practitioners can share examples of their work more easily”

“I think issues around inclusivity in this field are problematic. I won’t talk about ethnicity here as it is complex and loaded but I have been aware of issues of inclusivity all my life as a trainer and find them no more satisfactory now than when I started. For advanced training it is about the professional capacity of the trainee at this stage, although things may be different in the future.”

Also raised were **organisational problems** for small organisations who can offer musicians only limited amounts of work (especially if this is combined with problems of rurality) and other timing problems:

“There are quite a few people with these skills in [cities further afield] but the work demand we have is not sustainable for people travelling more than about 30 minutes to a session”

“There seem to be enough musicians out there, of excellent quality but it’s not always easy to hire them at the times we require owing to: a) Short period between hearing about funding and project start; b) Many musicians work in schools which means day times are not always practical”

Some organisations may just need to accept that their working environment is a particularly expensive one (which in turn may mean persuading funders that their standard grant criteria may need tweaking (Burbush 2009). But there may also be mileage in such organisations forming “buying groups” and sharing (subject to data protection controls, of course) details of both musicians in their geographical and work-type areas and work opportunities. One organisation is thinking of providing recruiting services to others:

“we are looking at rolling out our open application process to other authorities, whereby we go in and run interviews etc and hopefully identify a workforce for an authority to use, plus support bespoke training programmes. This also hopefully gives a solution to musicians’ questions regarding ‘how do I get started’ “

6. Creating quality community musicians

Training is fundamental to community music practice: half of Sound Sense’s mission is to “assist in the professional development of [community music] practitioners,” (Macdonald 1995). And **in-house training** as a method of overcoming supply issues was prevalent:

“We run an annual trainee amateur scheme where we develop a workshop leader. This enables us to continually build our freelance team and also to look for people with specific skills”

“There is a shortage of appropriately skilled (folk) music educators. ... We have addressed this as much as possible by building work shadowing, trainee positions and specially commissioned CPD into our projects and programmes of work wherever possible”

There are possible disadvantages to in-house training. One respondent recognised the danger: “I have always run top up programmes for my team ... Please note, this is not entirely satisfactory as it relies far too much on my style.” It might also lead to a restriction in mobility of labour, if every travelling community musician has to be “re-trained” whenever they join a new organisation; and hence produce further inefficiencies for the profession. Such “situated learning” is, of course, the heart of an apprenticeship; and apprenticeship-type training, with its emphasis on experiential learning, has long been championed as a key learning environment for community musicians. But there are also the possible dangers of learning practices “particular to [one] community” (Camlin 2012).

What are the justifications, then, outweighing these downsides for in-house training? Respondents said that in-house training was not about starting from scratch, but about topups of specific knowledge, sharing the organisation’s culture, melding the team:

“The justification is the need for music leaders to be able to do the specific job ... top up training with particular projects /client groups / issues in mind.”

“In the steelband community this is fairly standard across the world, nearly all the established community bands run similar in house schemes to bring on a new generation of leaders with specific relevant skills and experience. Following a particular leader’s style contributes to a band’s sound and personality and is seen as an advantage here although there is still room for developing individual styles in new leaders in the best schemes.”

But there was a concern that the organisation needed to keep its own CPD up to date:

“This must be informed by regular updates by that organisation, and regular CPD opportunities being taken which are then cascaded through the staff. Otherwise there is a danger that the organisation becomes fossilised, insisting on using methods which have been disproved or outmoded. The person speaking might not be offering training rooted in best practice, who is monitoring their delivery?”

In-house training might also be about remedial training for some musicians – but this should diminish if a good qualification (see below) is brought in:

“If there was a good qualification, and the appropriate accessible and affordable training to enable community musicians / music educators to gain this, then that would minimise the need for in house training as I could be more confident that basics would be covered. I would still want to do this however, to push the work forward and continue to develop working practice, pedagogy and quality of work, however I would not have to plan so much fill in gaps of skills, knowledge, understanding.”

Specific calls for more training (or more use of the training that exists) were usually at a local level, usually specific to the setting or intent and purpose, at both beginner and advanced level:

“Community musicians would benefit from training that focuses on particular groups or settings (eg music with frail, elderly people in residential care). “

”Current shortage areas are: facilitative working with older people, choral conducting and vocal training (at the higher level of musical skill), community musicians with orchestral specialism/passion.”

“I see that there are some opportunities for training musicians to work in a healthcare setting which is excellent because it is so unbelievably different to working in a school or youth club setting. Because it is so difficult to prepare, I think this training should be based within a hospital for some of the session(s) because you really do have to see it to believe it.”

Does this mean that community musicians need completely different training (and by extension, qualifications) for each setting, client group, intent and purpose? Apparently not; there was a lot of consensus that **core skills** were transferable between contexts – assuming that core skills included such elements as emotional intelligence and groupwork:

“I am clear in my own practice and training delivery that a lot of community music training is in fact an orientation to a type of approach and that that approach is pretty much the same with all groups – reflective practice, creative groupwork, empowerment strategies, understanding inclusion etc.”

“The common ground is empathy, listening skills, ability to lead in a supportive way, ability to adapt plans in a flexible way as you discover how the participants react to different activities and when you need to change the energy of the workshop

for any reason, how to deal with individual needs in a group situation, and how to identify individual learning paths, monitor reactions, and build energy and focus with a group.”

Contextual skills can then be built on top – and it could be the responsibility of the hirer to ensure the community musician knows and understands their specific context:

“[General training] should certainly be sensitive to the variety of settings in which a community musician might work but I continue to see a need for training (in the CPD sense) relating to specific settings. For example the needs of frail, very elderly people are different from the needs of active but disaffected young people. [But] we would expect community musicians to have an underlying ability to understand and be sensitive to the specific needs of any group.”

“There is a strong argument for practitioners to experience a wide range of settings and to be supported in developing strategies that could be useful specifically in each case – eg working with wheelchair users supported by carers, working with different age groups in youth clubs and informal setting – but this is all underpinned by the practitioner’s own understanding of their own music making and how they can adapt and develop their ideas for each setting.”

“We think there’s a responsibility here on the purchaser/ commissioner of work, in terms of providing appropriate guidance and context for the work, more than there is on being trained to work in specific settings. Obviously, this puts an onus on the purchaser to know and articulate their context, and how it differs from others. The context has three aspects – the culture and practical operation of the setting, the users, and the aim of the work. This kind of guidance helps musicians (or indeed any other visitor) to quickly grasp how they should work, and what they should be doing. It also means that the organisation (and staff within it) are better able to understand what a visiting artist or musician is doing, how they work alongside, and how they maintain the benefits in the longer term.”

The model above probably works in most cases. But respondents identified an issue where the music genre was very specific, and the training pattern might need turning on its head – or even just taking on trust:

“There is a question here as to whether it is more (resource) effective to find people with genre specific or instrument specific knowledge and give them the leadership skills or to give leaders the specific musical skills required. For example, can a generalist learn the skills necessary to run credible DJ workshops or is it better to find DJs who wish to become music leaders?”

“we get lots of enquiries (including from other organisations similar to us) about finding people who can do urban music styles (of whatever type, down to the latest fashionable micro genre) to work with children in challenging circumstances. Our experience is that people who have learned these skills tend to have learned very informally, and professional work in this area (as a performer, or producer, or whatever) is in no way connected to qualifications. ...Which is fine, until it comes

to delivering workshops; we can't tell a good musician from a poor one, and it is a very specialist area of practice. ... So for us, this is a live issue – we have to take the word of people who know more about it than we do.”

However, training – both its availability and the demand for it – has been hit hard by the economic downturn (as some consultancy being carried out by Sound Sense is confirming). And other solutions to improving quality were based on what works well when it does work: including **recommendations** from other organisations – provided these could be relied on:

“We hire leaders with a proven track record; we know their background and they will have a history of successful community arts delivery in this field”

“The musicians recommended to us by one music organisation are always excellent because they have a verification process. I would like to see a similar approach by another organisation's music leaders who I don't believe are vetted for suitability, experience, love of the job and many other important qualities required of a community musician.”

7. The role of qualifications

Organisations whose intent is music first considered qualifications central to the quality of the musicians who work for them:

“Teachers on our staff all hold QTS and have years of teaching experience combined with a music degree or similar (and hence have a great deal of familiarity with the music curriculum); they have all undergone specific training in our methodology during past recruitment initiatives”

But for nearly 30 years now – since the publication of Owen Kelly's polemic *Storming the citadels* (Kelly 1983) – qualifications have been the folkloric demon of those community arts' practices which fall into our categories of music+ and development organisations: “Some of Owen's severest criticisms are reserved for those who would seek to 'professionalise' community arts, primarily through training, authorising those 'qualified' to do community arts which in turn leads to a career structure, thereby sealing the fate of what began as a radical, even revolutionary, movement,” (Price 1991).

The intervening years have hardly shifted this demon out of the eyes of community musicians. NVQs have come and gone, largely untroubled by community musicians despite the work by Sound Sense put into developing them over the years. But this current survey shows some movement of attitude.

In the round 1 questioning, the issues of qualifications were mentioned only as prompts rather than as direct questions. In community music there has been a tendency to equate “qualification” with “book learning” (possibly even when this has not been the case). It is clear (see the section above on recruiting) that employers set great store on practical skills and ability, particularly soft and personal skills, and believe qualifications do not cover these adequately:

“we have taken on musicians with no musical qualifications to see how it works, some have been great others not so. I guess sometimes the only way for a musician to get a qualification is to do a course with placements, in which case that is fine. It ought then to include groupwork skills, and working with non musicians as well as some input on working with different client groups and adapting to those needs”

“All that qualifications would do is demonstrate a commitment to the field unless they had a substantive chunk of placement experience in our field”

“I don't think qualifications are the answer. I've seen many people come out of creative leadership courses without enough practical experience. Also, we expect a practitioner to be constantly reflecting and learning from their work, something that is not necessarily demonstrated through participation in training (but there is a need for more reflective practice training).”

“I don't think it's about qualifications, it's about training, experience and attitude. I'm ambivalent about qualifications and think that we as a sector should keep our focus on the CONTENT and MODEL of training that practitioners can access rather than focusing on the nature of the qualification. It's the DELIVERY of the qualifications that matters.”

And mandatory qualifications were seen as excluding – as was reliance on little black books see above:

“I do not like the exclusivity of a mandatory qualification as it would exclude most of the excellent people I currently work with who are professional musicians with excellent people and teaching skills and extremely busy lives with family and mortgages to take care of. ... I have seen the professional body of music therapists take over my local NHS Mental Health wards virtually excluding all community musicians owing to the decision that musicians on ward working freelance should have the mandatory PG DIP in music therapy. This has excluded some brilliant group music work taking place and relegated music to a clinical setting.”

But some respondents – perhaps somewhat grudgingly – acknowledged qualifications as indicators of some skills, perhaps particularly specialist skills (which can cover anything from music tech to adult tutoring), perhaps as an indicator of curriculum covered, or just as a commitment to practitioners' own professional development:

“For the professional standing of the sector though, we like qualifications – academic or vocational. We appreciate that artistic practice in general tends to be anti establishment and to resist conforming to other people's norms of behaviour. However, we think this is outweighed by the lack of formal standards meaning that anyone can say 'I'm a musician', and people who can't make a true judgement about their skills may believe them. ... So for that reason (that much purchasing is done by non experts) we support the idea of qualifications.”

“Qualifications help if I can see the result of the training/discipline in the musician and it definitely helps me feel there are certain things they should know – but

training is definitely not my main reason for hiring as it is so dependant on the individual. ... If I see that the person has gone on certain very focused professional development courses it would attract me but I would still assess them working within the group and experience of hands on work in the field would impress me more.”

“Qualifications are (hmmm, obviously), a ‘qualifier’ for us, rather than a ‘winner’. For music, we know what those qualifications mean in some detail, especially if they’ve studied locally. So if people don’t have qualifications they have more to prove so we know their basics are rounded and complete. We are happier with people who demonstrate that they have studied/ trained in working with particular client groups, or in specialist areas – it means they have learned from other people’s experience, and perhaps understand theory too, rather than relying on their own experiences alone. We also rate people who keep up with their own training needs, and take their CPD seriously. “

One respondent had enthusiasm for the diploma in dance teaching and learning (DDTAL, www.trinitycollege.co.uk/site/?id=2015 accessed 3 January 2013), but noted two concerns: the need for a more entry level qualification that could be built on up to the DDTAL’s level 6; and the issue of practitioners who worked across more than one artform: someone working in music and dance would find it “daunting and expensive to get training and qualifications in both.”

Between the first and second round questioning (ie September and October 2012) information on the developing certificate for music educators (see Background) became more widespread, and it prominently featured in Sound Sense’s monthly bulletins to members (including all respondents here); the first draft of the qualification was made available to Sound Sense members in late October. CME public consultations took place in late November, and an online survey was open late November to 5 December. These developments might have affected respondents’ replies to a second-round question on qualifications: “Is the problem that many have around qualifications an antipathy to qualifications per se, or just the ones available? Could we indeed all get behind one ‘well designed qual that the whole sector, formal/non formal, employers, academics, practitioners etc all sign up’ as one respondent put it? Would this be the so-called Qualified [as it was styled at the time] Music Educator qualification? Would you champion any other qualifications (which ones)?”

Certainly, the second-round respondents were more welcoming to a recognition that qualifications could be useful. But there were still big concerns over the need for universal recognition of prior learning; over the importance of variability in curriculums for any course work; and a continuing concern that one size won’t ever fit all:

“I would get behind a well designed qualification as an indicator and helpful pre filter in recruiting. It would be a way of knowing that certain basics had been covered. It’s very important that any qualification should recognise prior learning and skills (both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’). Experience in itself is not enough, it doesn’t necessarily equate to stronger skills. Experience can reinforce weak skills through repetition,”

“The problem with many qualifications is that there is such variety in the same qualification type between one institution and another. We appreciate that that’s the nature of a market in Higher and Further Education institutions are free to design their course content as they see fit, and individuals choose their own specialism even within an institution – but it does mean that one person’s Music BA is very different from another’s. It could get you to the final of Mastermind on the subject of Buxtehude, or you could be a great, collaborative, keyboard player.”

“Maybe it would work but there are so many varied settings for cm that I’m not sure that a ‘one size fits all’ qual would be workable, except perhaps on a very superficial level. Perhaps a generic CME could be optional/encouraged but I can’t see a mandatory one working. My organisation for one would be forced to ignore such a move because no one who we hire would bother to get qualified but they would still be in high demand because of their very specific skills and experience.”

8. Certificate for Music Educators

Here we look more specifically at whether the CME might be of any help to the respondents – pro or anti – to the prompts on qualifications. (The version referenced for this discussion is the *Level 4 Certificate for Music Educators: Units, Rules of Combination and Assessment Principles* Final Version 1.0 22nd January 2013, though it does not appear to be formally published anywhere.)

While the CME seems to be getting a relatively gentle ride so far from a constituency traditionally hostile – or at best apathetic – to the notion of qualifications, it has two main limitations for employers’ needs: it has been designed only for those working with children and young people (though much of it is generic or easily adaptable to other age groups); and it has a huge remit: “relevant to all music educators regardless of their musical genres and stage in career” (p3). While the latter point is normally a cause for celebration, here it means that the qualification tends to use broad language so that it remains appropriate to all types of music educator – from home-based piano teachers through schools’ peripatetic tutors to community musicians.

In turn, that means the scope for interpretation about each “assessment criterion” in the qualification is equally broad. To take just one example: to show you can “Select and use appropriate strategies, resources and pedagogical approaches that will support, challenge and inspire children and young people to engage in, play, listen to and perform music in ways that develop their personal and musical competencies and understanding” (p9) is likely to mean different things to the trainer instructing the piano teacher, the peri, and the community musician. The employer of a community musician, therefore, may not find a CME taught to satisfy the needs of the home-based piano teacher, say, much use – as a number of respondents have pointed out above.

On the plus side, the CME offers much: it has been designed for those working with what is still the largest client-group; children and young people; its huge remit makes it possible

to be relevant to all music educators including community musicians; it comes with status – from its original recommender, through to its adoption by ACE, to its reasonably positive welcome from a significant part of the music education community; and it makes specific reference to the importance of recognition of prior learning, and a modular approach to gaining credits – all points that responders make above.

Employers of community musicians should therefore be able to make increasing use of this qualification as part of their recruitment tactics – particularly once the specifics of the curriculums being taught by different providers are known, so that employers of “music first” (see p3) practitioners would know that the way the qualification is being interpreted by Provider “A” emphasises musical skills; while a “development” organisation would know they would have to look for graduates of Provider “B”, who concentrates on the personal and social development approaches.

And smaller organisations – over time, and with good intelligence about the approaches of different course providers and awarding organisations – might find it particularly useful.

There could also be the scope to use the qualification “off-licence” (to use a pharmaceutical analogy). Trainers could shape their courses to address specific learning outcomes and assessment criteria in the qualification, but with twists to meet the particular context: working with older people rather than children and young people, say; or digging deeper into issues of children in challenging circumstances. While such use would have no official validity, simply the existence of a national framework on which learning activity could be hung – or which could be disputed – would be a major step forward for community music.

9. Conclusions

To remind us – this is the question (to employers) our lab was addressing:

“Can you get the quality of community musicians you want: if so how do you do this (eg by recommendation, by qualification, by training them yourself); if not, what professional development would be required to get you what you want?”

Broadly, the answer is yes – employers *could* get the quality they wanted. They didn’t do it by any one route, and they didn’t all succeed every time. Some improvements could be made, especially for smaller, newer employers.

Next, an understanding. For almost all organisations represented here, the music was important – but equally, so were creating personal, social, or community developments in the participants. It’s against this background that community music organisations work, that community musicians are expected to deliver on, and that is our particular part of the landscape of “participatory practice” and “participatory settings.” Unless we say otherwise, the responses above were generated through that lens.

How then did employers hire? In general, they were looking for three packages of skills from community musicians:

- (i) **musical skills – which, apart from the problem of rarer genres discussed above, was not a major problem for respondents here**
- (ii) **core personal skills – emotional intelligence, reflective practice, creative groupwork, empowerment strategies, understanding inclusion – which were reported as sometimes lacking**
- (iii) **contextual skills – an understanding of and appropriate musical and personal reactions to the client group, setting, and intent and purpose of each piece of work, the responsibility for which at least starts with the employer (since it's usually their setting etc the musician is working in).**

And they found (or sometimes didn't) these skillsets largely by recommendation and through observation of practice. Through checking out qualifications – particularly when they knew what curriculum had been sat. By using a little (or in some cases a large) black book. By not worrying overmuch about inclusivity. By doing all of these things together. And in particular by being experienced in doing all of these things. When hiring was tricky, what did employers do? Personal and soft skills in general were sometime lacking; and also specific skills, for working with particular client groups, or for particular intents and purposes. These were addressed by specific training. – often in-house, sometimes outsourced. Some problems, such as the difficulty of finding people with both community music skills and expertise in the rarer musical genres, remained intractable.

The problem with all of the previous paragraph is that smaller and less experienced organisations find hiring more difficult than larger, more experienced ones – who typically have more contacts, more experience of observation, greater resources for training, and more work enabling them to benefit from recruitment economies of scale. Local “buying groups” of smaller, newer organisations might help build economies of scale; working together with larger organisations who would offer their recruitment services might be an answer, too.

And – provided issues of appropriate curricula for the type of community musician wanted can be addressed – the new Level 4 Certificate for Music Educators could help not only smaller employers but larger ones too. It may not give this well-respected respondent all that they wanted – but it would be a step in the right direction:

“[Teaching,] engineering, health, architecture etc all have a recognised minimum qualification. Community music doesn't. Whatever training, courses or schemes we can recommend or undertake, there has never been a recognised core baseline qualification which everyone, not just those in the sector, but teachers, arts officers, commissioners, early years settings, understand and recognise. ...

I would suggest that the smorgasbord of qualifications that have grown up, although probably very well thought out individually, only have local currency. A few more nationally, due to the reputation of the establishment running the qualification, but only within the sector. The outside world either doesn't know to ask or doesn't know what to look for, so for a musician, what or which qualification should they study for?

We haven't tried a central qualification, neither have we tried one that brings all the various sectors together. Of course it will be/ is a hard job, but if cracked and the outcome is respected by the sector and then by the wider stakeholders and commissioners surely the job will be a good 'un!'"

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Appendix 1: questions and prompts

Round 1 questions

Q1 What are the main focuses of your work?

Can you tell us a) what client groups you work with (eg older people, people with learning difficulties, etc etc); b) what settings (eg schools, prisons); c) to what purpose (as part of a curriculum, for arts purposes, for community or personal development purposes, for wellbeing, therapy, clinical purposes etc); d) what sort of organisation you are (eg local authority, arts organisation, music venue or group, a non-arts social care/welfare/health/criminal justice organisation). You may well have multiple answers: as you respond to the rest of the questions here, tell us if your answers vary depending on which part of the landscape you're working in.

Now, thinking about hiring (or employing, or commissioning, etc) community musicians (or musicians in education, or musicians to work in participatory settings, etc):

Q2 Can you get the quality of musician you want?

What do you mean by "quality"? Are there specific types or focuses of your work that are easier or more difficult to find musicians for? Is supply rather than quality a problem for you? Has any specific initiative on recruiting cracked the nut for you? Etc

Q3 Where you **can** get the quality of musician you want, how have you achieved this?

How much do you rely on recommendation? What part do qualifications play in hiring decisions? Or training/other professional development activities? Do you rely on your own training programmes? Etc

Q4 Where you **can't** get the quality of musician you want, what do you think is needed to achieve that?

Would there be a role for more qualifications (what covering)? For mandatory qualifications (how would they be policed)? For better training (what about, and who would do it)? A bigger "little black book" (how would you make sure this was inclusive?). Etc

Round 2 questions

Questions in this round are more specific, perhaps even leading. Follow the same rule as round 1, and treat them as a jumping-off point for your extended thoughts.

Q1 Is the problem that many have around qualifications an antipathy to qualifications per se, or just the ones available?

Could we indeed all get behind one "well designed qual that the whole sector, formal/non formal, employers, academics, practitioners etc all sign up" as one respondent put it? Would this be the so-called Qualified Music Educator qualification? (see www.soundsense.org/metadot/index.pl?id=27277&isa=Newsitem&op=show) Would you champion any other qualifications (which ones)?

Q2 Specificity of training: there were a number of calls for “training that focuses on particular groups or settings,” that “work in a healthcare setting... is so unbelievably different to working in a school or youth club setting” (quote not picked out above). Yet we are learning from other labs that differences between artforms, let alone settings or purposes are not so great. In your experience, what is different between say working in a hospital and working in a youth club? what are the similarities? Could you make a case that the underlying skills, knowledge and understandings are core between a wide range of settings and purposes? And when would the differences kick in?

Q3 Observation of practice: Playing devil’s advocate, one problem community music faces is that it looks like a very expensive practice, compared with, say, instrumental tuition on the one hand and care homes activities budgets on another. Recruitment processes that rely on observation of practice looks really inefficient and old-fashioned: we can’t think of any other profession that works this way. Can any respondent - with reference to the real world - make a justification of this practice?

Q4 In-house training. One quote pulled out above recognises the danger: “I have always run top up programmes for my team ... Please note, this is not entirely satisfactory as it relies far too much on my style” It leads also to a restriction in mobility of labour, if every travelling community musician has to be “re-trained” whenever they join a new organisation; and further inefficiencies for the profession. What is the justification, then, outweighing these downsides for in-house training?