



Supporting Improved Learning Opportunities for Hard-to-Reach Groups through the Use of Participatory Arts (SILO)

Baseline Research Report: Participatory Arts and Skill Development Literature Review

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The aim of the SILO project is to empower participatory arts practitioners as agents of social inclusion by developing participatory arts pedagogy that will enable socially excluded adults to achieve validated competencies through non-formal learning. We have undertaken a comprehensive review of existing literature which relates to the research and practice of participatory arts projects and how adult skills and competencies were gained by participants. We have also sought a clear definition of 'participatory arts' to ensure clarity and focus for our 'tests' and developing pedagogy.

Defining Participatory Art

Participation describes involvement in activities and practices which engage participants in meaningful ways (Bishop 2012.1). It encompasses more than consultation with people and should bring about critical engagement or thinking which leads to transformations. It is described as a malleable dialogue that informs the work of artists, builds audiences, engages communities and forges routes into active experience (Arts Council England, 2010).

In participatory art, professional artists work in collaboration with people to create original artworks that relate to or express participants' experience, outlook or community context (Mental Health Foundation, 2011). Arts Council England (2010) describe participatory practice as being 'typified' in a number of ways including: creative practice being responsive to the issues of the participant; activities being led by artists with a detailed understanding of issues faced by participants; employing a personalised approach; and work is achieved in partnership or collaboration.

Clements (2011) argues that creative participation is a radical and self-determined process involving socially engaged practices which challenge the more dominant view of art being an individualised concept. Furthermore, he argues that this view has previously informed our engagement with and understanding of the arts. Furthermore, he states that the self-determinacy needed to achieve creative participation is a challenge to community arts educators, particularly when giving authority to their students and assisting adult learners to obtain their own perspectives through the encouragement of self-directed learning.

Mattarasso's *Use or Ornament* (1997) aimed to provide evidence of the many impacts and benefits that participation in the arts can have on individuals and communities. His findings suggest that participation promotes confidence, creativity and transferable skills alongside social benefits such as friendships, building communities and enjoyment. Furthermore, he states that 'arts projects can strengthen people's commitment to places and their engagement in tackling problems, especially in the context of urban regeneration'.

Moreover, research demonstrates that participatory arts can have positive outcomes for: improved mental health and wellbeing; improved literacy skills; increased employability; improved interpersonal skills; and improvements in attitudes and positive behaviours (Coulter, F, 2001; Cox & Gelthorpe, 2008; Miles and Strauss, 2008).

Participatory Arts and Adult Skills Literature Review

This review aims to provide an evidence base for the assumption that involvement in participatory arts programmes develops transferable key skills. The review found evidence of skill development in many case studies. However, it also found that many participatory arts projects and programmes are not directly concerned with skill development and therefore do not collect meaningful and longitudinal data. Many projects are achieved with an end product or production as a goal, with skills and learning assessment acknowledged as a consequence of the process but not as a main aim. The current and recent research agenda in participatory arts practice appears to be heavily weighted towards social and well-being outcomes and therefore, there is a wealth of positive data to consider within this area of interest. Skill development is obviously an embedded component of increasing well-being and/or the development of social outcomes. But the review found little evidence of tried and tested instruments or methods of measuring skill development achieved in participatory arts. Evidence is mainly qualitative in nature, relying on first person testimony, although some case studies have developed the use of pre and post self- assessment instruments relating to skills and knowledge building.

The review includes a number of case studies and research papers concerning the criminal justice system. This data does contain evidenced skill and competency outcomes across different art forms, and appears to have been collected and analysed in light of commissioning requirements. Arts projects commissioned by organisations and agencies within the criminal justice system are defined within the following desired outcomes: routes to employability; through the gate support; diversion from offending or being at risk of offending; and building confidence and competence for a successful release. Building skills in life, basic, key and employability are essential factors for such outcomes and are a commissioning requirement.

The review found over 100 documents relating to participatory arts and skills. This section offers 20 case studies which provide the most effective evidence from the wider review. It is structured by art form to provide an overview of the manner in which skills development is embedded and acknowledged in different production techniques.

Music

An evidence review commissioned by Youth Music and carried out by Daykin et al (2011) assessed literature and research concerning the impact of music making in Youth Justice settings. The review involved: a systematic evidence review of the published English language and international literature on music-making with children and young people in justice settings; an evidence and best practice review of the 'grey' literature including UK project reports focusing on music-making in the youth justice system; and a review of projects with young offenders funded by Youth Music since 1999.

The study found that alongside musical skills, participants in music making projects gained skills relation to education and employment including numeracy, literacy, problem solving, communication skills and team-working. Additionally, many projects reported positive outcomes concerning progression attributed to participants gaining a heightened awareness of possible progression routes.

The review reveals the diverse ways in which music activities and programmes are currently designed to support personal development and develop life skills in young offenders, as well as contributing to rehabilitation goals. This review acknowledges a general consensus that music making can deliver important benefits and outcomes for young people in Youth Justice Settings. There are many reported outcomes and

impacts of music making for young people, in particular, increased engagement with education and employment, enhanced skills, personal development and positive changes in attitudes and behaviour.

It states that music making projects can achieve 'increased levels of engagement, enthusiasm, motivation, concentration and commitment' by participants and that developing musical skills also increased knowledge and understanding including: numeracy; literacy; group-working; verbal communication; use of technology; and problem solving. Furthermore, participant's horizons were broadened and they developed an awareness of progression routes alongside an increased motivation to undertake education and employment.

The evaluation of Musical Pathways (Vigagiani et Al, 2014) highlighted the positive benefits of creative music making with hard to reach young people, stating that the process delivers 'positive learning experiences' and that 'active engagement' in arts programmes can deliver 'life changing results'. This study focussed on the outcomes of a creative music programme for young people in the criminal justice system. Central to the study was the need to find methodological processes for measuring the impact of arts programmes against the newly introduced 'Payments by Results' (PbR) approach to commissioning which was introduced as an 'economic lever' to engage with the community, voluntary and independent sectors. PbR contracts are issued by the central government (UK) and involve payment in arrears for improved outcomes. Therefore, the system forces service providers to focus their services towards measurable outcomes including improved educational achievement and increased employment. Such contracts are unlikely to be awarded against soft outcomes such as improved resilience or wellbeing. They are likely to be contracted to deliver increased youth employment or reduced offending.

The study evaluated the experience of 120 young people who were referred via the criminal justice system to the Creative Music Programme. In relation to skill development the study found that older participants developed 'sophisticated group work skills' and learnt to 'actively question and challenge musicians in constructive ways'. Furthermore, young people who were acknowledged to be particularly disruptive achieved the production of CD which involved group work, discussion, decision making and negotiation skills.

Methods of engagement adopted by musicians included the use of various teaching styles and as a 'continuum' the approach was person centred with experienced musicians being adept at putting participants at the centre of the process, allowing it to be led by their interests and not becoming overwhelming.

The report concluded that participatory music programmes provide opportunities for young people to engage with 'alternative skills and competencies' that are not generally available in traditional education. Furthermore, it states that music enables young people to draw upon their life experiences in 'creative ways' and to engage positively with their existing knowledge and experiences. It states that the process brings about learning, develops aspirations and positive feelings about the future.

Materasso's (1996) case study of traditional music festivals, known as 'fèisean' across the Highlands and Islands of Scotland assessed the festivals' impacts on individual and community development, empowerment, social cohesion and local identity. The festivals involve a range of learning activities, mostly based around traditional music for all age ranges leading up to a final event. They are run and organised by local people. Learning activities include: residential for children leading to concert performances; key board; Gaelic guitar; tin whistle; and other traditional instruments. The workshops are offered within the community and include large numbers of children and adults. The 'fèisean' comes from an oral tradition which has 'shaped the way the music is taught'. There is a longstanding tradition of passing skills from generation to generation forming a 'living chain of continuity'.

This study found positive results in relation to skills acquisition including: planning and organising; leadership; and teaching and negotiating. Data collection from 242 participants found that participation in festival activities had enabled 89% to try something new; 80% to develop new skills; and 37% had gone on to further learning.

The Sounding Out Project is a 'through the gate' programme designed to engage with ex-prisoners who have previously participated in the Music in Prisons project (MiP), run by the Irene Taylor Trust. MiP involves co-production of original music between professionals and prisoners and aims to build valuable life skills such as team working, communication and self-confidence, and also to kick-start engagement in education, both when in custody and on release. The Sounding Out project aimed to assist reintegration into society whilst also improving well-being and impacting on employment and further training..

Cartwright (2013) reports that the project was successful in delivering 'multidimensional support' to its participants, including financial support for attending, opportunities to make new friends and contacts, signposting to other training and performance opportunities which resulted in a lift in motivation, hope for the future, esteem and a sense of achievement. Competencies and skills found prevalent within this research included key skills, literacy, and taking responsibility.

Drama

Day (2009) conducted an evaluation of the Journey Women project, a Geese Theatre programme which engages women in the criminal justice system in drama based group work. A literature review carried out in relation to this study demonstrated that existing research suggests that participation in drama based learning can increase problem solving abilities and generate interest in further learning. Furthermore, there is good evidence that these projects are an effective way of delivering basic skills training (Hughes, 2005).

Also, acknowledged was the effectiveness of role play techniques in helping participants to practice problem solving and social skills. Likewise, role plays enabled participants to practice new skills and behaviours. The authors draw upon the work of Landy (1990) who concluded that learning how to perform and to adapt to different roles in life develops life skills.

This study analysed women participants' diaries which were kept throughout the drama group work process. It found that the 'Journey Woman' project had a positive impact on motivation, the development of insight, and interpersonal skills needed for effectively engaging with others. The author concluded that the development of skills appeared to be 'underpinned by the collaborative and safe learning environment created by the facilitators of the project'.

Miss Spent was a drama based intervention for young women involved in the criminal justice system and aimed to engage women in a critical analysis of their attitudes, offending behaviour and aspirations in order to build positive and self-defined routes to self-worth and fulfilment. The programme was delivered by the organisation Clean Break who uses arts and drama to promote self-esteem, challenge barriers to learning, and to develop skills and aspirations for women in difficult or challenging circumstances.

An evaluation by Eagle (2010) refers to a Miss Spent programme delivered in April 2010, at the Josephine Butler Unit (JBU) for young women, at HMP Downview in Surrey. The programme was considered to be experiential and explored, through drama, issues that could face young women in prison and on their release. The evaluation methodology included the use of observational records and the production of project work. Analysis of both demonstrated an increase in the ability to discuss a 'wide range of issues relevant to young

women in society'. Furthermore the project enabled participants to assess their personal strengths and creative skills which the majority of women had not previously considered.

Skills impact measurement was assessed by a self-assessment questionnaire completed by the women pre and post project. The women reported the following results concerning increases in personal skills:

- Confidence & self-esteem 67%
- Motivation 78%
- Taking responsibility for my actions 56%
- Using time in a meaningful way whilst here 89%
- Feeling positive about my future 56%
- Enjoy taking part in education activity 89%
- Enjoy taking part in arts activity 78%
- Skills for employment 89%
- Skills for wellbeing 100%

This study found that Miss Spent was successful in achieving its aims of developing and increasing the following life skills: communication skills; team working skills; presentation skills; problem solving skills; planning skills; emotional literacy; ability to self-motivate.

Arts Council England (2006) report, What's the Point summarises the findings of a case study of a drama project with young people at risk of offending from Blackburn, Lancashire. The study examines the contribution of participatory arts projects in building the key skills essential to support learning and the reengagement of young people in education and training.

The project involved a 10 day programme delivered by two workers from Theatre in Prisons and Probation (TiPP). The participants were 9 young people between the ages of 12 and 17 who had all been referred to the Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) programme called, PLUS Arts. This is an enrichment programme designed to engage young people aged 12-18 with low levels of literacy and numeracy. As such, all programmes had embedded literacy and numeracy activities.

The study reported positive outcomes in writing skills, development of vocabulary and a renewed confidence in the ability to write. Success is attributed to diverting the focus of writing towards developing content for the drama/performance ensuring that writing became 'associated with enjoyment'. This method was complemented with high levels of support and 'positive re-enforcement'.

Contributory success factors are stated to be the provision of a 'safe place' for positive interaction with peers; and the exploration of feelings and relationships. It is claimed that young people responded positively in this situation and demonstrated a 'marked increase' in negotiation and cooperation skills.

In conclusion, the participants enjoyed working with drama and reported that the enjoyment factor assisted their skill development. Writing and language skills improved throughout the process as did their confidence to use their skills productively.

Cross-Disciplinary Studies

Matarasso' Use or Ornament (1997) is often cited as the seminal text for the demonstration of the Social Impact of the Arts. The study commissioned by Comedia was the first large scale attempt to demonstrated the added value of participation in the arts. It aimed to find evidence of:

- Social impact of participation in the arts at amateur or community level
- To identify ways of assessing social impact which are helpful and workable for policy-makers and those working in the arts or social fields

The study involved a wide scale evaluation of over 60 projects and found that:

- Participation in the arts is an effective route for personal growth, leading to enhanced confidence, skill-building and educational developments which can improve people's social contacts and employability.
- Participation in the arts can contribute to social cohesion by developing networks and understanding, and building local capacity for organisations and self-determination.
- It brings benefits in other areas such as environmental renewal and health promotion, and injects an element of creativity into organisational planning.
- It produces social change which can be seen, evaluated and broadly planned
- It represents a flexible, responsive and cost-effective element of a community development strategy.
- It strengthens rather than dilutes Britain's cultural life, and forms a vital factor of success rather than a soft option in social policy.

Matarasso found that participation in the arts has a 'significant impact on people's self-confidence' and that most participants gain practical and social skills which are transferrable to their working and home lives. The study showed that a significant proportion of adults were encouraged to take training and education. Data from 513 respondents demonstrated:

- 84% felt more confident about what they can do
- 37% decided to take up training or a course
- 80% learnt new skills by being involved
- 86% of adult participants have tried things they haven't done before.
- 49% think taking part has changed their ideas

The study claims that the 'creativity, openness and elasticity' of the arts are the roots of its social impacts and suggest that a way of integrating the arts with public policy would be designing participatory arts around 7 core principles:

1. Clear objectives
2. Equitable partnership
3. Good planning
4. Shared ethical principles
5. Excellence
6. Proportional expectations
7. Joint evaluation

In relation to Life Long Learning, the author highlights the need for people to 'keep pace with an ever changing work environment' and claims that the phrase 'life-long learning' is short hand for this need. He states the arts have a role to play, both in building people's confidence to learn, and also in the development of transferrable skills.

The report concludes that arts projects are an 'effective and enjoyable' way to learn new skills, citing that 80% of adults in this study agreed they had acquired skills. More importantly, participants consider these skills are 'valued'. The main areas of skill development were in drama, visual art, computers and creative technology. Participants demonstrated that they were keen to pursue further involvement and believed that their new skills would help with arts careers.

Overwhelmingly, adult participants identified new skills which were beyond arts and creativity including building confidence, able to speak in public and improved interpersonal skills. Digital technology projects were highlighted as important routes to employment which enabled and encouraged the acquisition of high level and relatively rare skills.

A discussion document (Walsh, 2014) commissioned by Creating Change Network in relation to their Future Stages project with young people reviewed literature and policy documents relating to participatory arts and young people at risk. The document drew upon the work of Sloman (2011) who stated that participatory art performs a developmental function when attempting to build capacity of individuals, groups and communities. In this instance, Sloman refers to capacity building involving developing empathy and emotional literacy as being equal to the development of practical skills.

Referred to is Cape UK's (2012) report which defines effective principles for participatory arts with young people. The report argues that a further benefit of the arts is the development of voices which aides decision making. Furthermore, it claims that personal development activities help young people to articulate thoughts and feeling and to negotiate their own pathways towards integration.

Also highlighted in this document is the manner in which participatory arts processes 'require participants' to conform to 'order and structure' appropriate to the art form including engaging with 'items, objects or materials. Furthermore, it describes art forms as having 'inner logics' which participants need to understand. It concluded that over time, participatory arts practices can impact on transferable skills including: increased confidence; emotional literacy; group work, co-operation; and the ability to focus.

However, the study recognises that the 'conviction of the practitioners delivering these interventions may sound idealistic'. However with reference to the work of Peaker and Johnson (2007) and Rideout (2010) it concludes that that the 'transformation of ideas, skills and behaviours through arts participation is possible.

Thomas et Al (2011) conducted a qualitative evaluation of a drop in participatory arts programme for homeless adults in Australia. The research found that motivation to attend and participate was high and many participants stated that the programme was a 'significant event' in their week by providing routine and continuity in their lives. Data collected from participants demonstrated how the programme connected them with skills and abilities they had held prior to becoming homeless and as such the programme provided a link to previous achievements.

The beneficial impacts of the programme were themed into four areas: a process of recovery; relationship to alcohol and other additions; decision making and moving forward; and mental health. The programme achieved positive benefits for connecting with individual skill bases and also in developing awareness of the skills of those in the group. One interviewee commented 'It brings out the spirituality in people as well. I found that people find themselves, they discover, they explore, they tap in to the inside of them and then eventually it comes out on canvas'. Feedback from respondents also demonstrated a 'general sense of discovery for many participants to find out what they could achieve'.

In relation to specific skill development the main area of progression was within decision making and during interviews the facilitator found a 'poignant connection' between the artwork and life in general. The researcher discussed the work of Bryne et Al (2010) who asserted that art programmes are unlike other life skills programmes as they are not explicitly aimed at skill development but present an informal opportunity to learn and demonstrate artistic skills. Furthermore, the work of Whiteford (2007) confirms that arts programmes bring about an 'inherent pull' towards 'occupational engagement'. The authors claim this pull is demonstrated by the participants' motivation to attend regularly which leads to the development of positive routines, providing 'consistency and coherence to life in a purposeful goal-directed way'.

Tett et Al (2012) investigated the ways in which arts can engage prisoners with learning and the improvement of literacy in a study of the impact of three arts interventions across three Scottish prisons. Using data collected from focus groups with participating prisoners they argue that the projects 'built an active learning culture and encouraged the improvement of verbal and written literacy skills'. Moreover, participants learned to work together, improved their self-confidence and became more trusting and supportive.

The projects studied were delivered by organisations of international standing and included the Scottish Ensemble, Scottish Opera and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and the Citizens Theatre. The Scottish Ensemble's Music for Change project involved young male prisoners in working with the Scottish Ensemble's Artist in Residence and a music tutor. The programme included visits from members of the Scottish Ensemble who assisted in teaching playing techniques and providing one to one support. The prisoners contributed to the programme and achieved a final performance. Scottish Opera and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra collaborated in a 6-month project, called 'From Start to Finish: How to Build an Opera'. This project worked with 25 prisoners to devise an original opera including writing the story, lyrics and music. The methodology involved encouraging prisoners to think about mood, musical motifs and the development of text. In addition, the prisoners took part an introductory course in animation techniques and created a short animated film.

The final project was delivered by Citizens Theatre and involved 35 male prisoners in producing and writing an original play. The prisoners worked with industry professionals and were involved in: set design and construction; play and song writing; producing live music; lighting; and sound and stage engineering.

In consideration of how learning took place within this project Tett et Al drew upon the research of Entwistle and Smith (2002) who argue that learning which derives from an individual's strengths and not their 'deficit' is the most effective. This process draws on participants' current knowledge and 'assists them to progress in terms of distance they have personally travelled' opposed to working to a set framework.

Data collected from a series of focus groups with participants was themed into three areas: Changing negative attitudes to learning; building an active learning culture; and enabling people to collaborate and work responsively. Analysis demonstrated that many participants viewed their participation as a 'second chance to learn' and noted the contrast between how education is delivered in schools and in prison, stating that the project had enabled them to learn in ways they had not in the past. The study found that the projects built an active learning culture. Participants reported that the project had 'enabled them to see what they were good at and opened up prospects for the future', as highlighted in this quote from a focus group: 'It's about self-achievement and learning more skills that I can add to'.

Moreover, the study found that the projects motivated participants to improve their literacy by using existing skills albeit 'spikey' to develop competence and interest in reading. Some participants were able to read song lyrics as they held meaning but would disengage with a novel that had no relevance to their lives. The manner in which literacy skills were embedded into activities enabled participants to 'work to their strengths'.

Success was also attributed to building and extending existing knowledge and skills, and in working collaboratively through encouragement. The authors also highlight that the significance of working with professional musicians and artists contributed to the quality of the experience, feeling valued and being held in import.

In conclusion, this study argues that the change process was impacted by the 'high quality of artistic engagement' and a genuine partnership between prisoners and professionals. Furthermore, the methodologies employed which built on existing strengths and knowledge in arts, written, and verbal skills resulted in participants working together more effectively and cultivating a trusting environment. Moreover, this growth in confidence led to increasing other skills and being open to possibilities.

A literature review carried out by the Mental Health Foundation (2010) on behalf of the Baring Foundation aimed to address a gap in literature about the positive impact participatory arts can have on older people. The review identified over 500 articles and included 31 in this review. In relation to skills and learning the review found that participatory arts for older people increased: confidence; feelings of accomplishment; and brought about new and positive aspects to their identity and life role. In relation to older adults who suffer with dementia, it found that participatory arts can help to improve cognitive functioning; communication; musical skills; memory and creative thinking.

With reference to skills development the review cites the work of Dabback (2008) who evidenced the impact of a professionally led music programme for older people delivered by New Horizons Band, New York. This band has over 100 members who reported that playing in the band had assisted them to form new positive identities post retirement and provided the opportunity to regain lost skills.

Also discussed is Taylor and Hallam's (2008) article 'Understanding what it means for older people to learn basic music skills on a keyboard' which found that learning to play a keyboard in later life increased confidence; brought about learning a new language and improved motor skills. Furthermore, the authors draw upon Reynolds (2010) who examined motivations for older women taking part in visual art making. The women at the centre of this study claimed that participating in visual art 'enriched inner lives, stimulated the senses and promoted mental absorption' which enabled them to 'develop new skills and take part in challenges'.

The authors draw on the exploration of the impact on older people who participated in 'old musical hall' productions (Pyman & Rugg, 2006). This study demonstrated skill development in time management, negotiation, people skills, assertiveness and listening. The author stated that the study's participants developed knowledge, skills, attitudes and enrichment.

Abbott (2005) was commissioned by Helix Arts to conduct a first stage investigation into the potential for including arts provision with the Youth Justice system and Social services in the North East of England for young offenders, looked after young people (in care of the local authority), and other young people at risk of offending. The researcher undertook a mapping exercise of over 90 arts based activities for young people in the North East of England during 2004-2005. This exercise was supplemented with a consultation with young persons' service providers. The arts activities were mainly visual and craft based and were in the main provided by in house staff who were non-arts professionals. However, some activities were sub-contracted to artists, arts organisations and creative delivery agents.

The investigation identified the following skills related impacts:

- Accredited programmes in sound engineering and radio production
- Technical skills i.e. editing, film production, storyboarding
- Drama, visual arts, music delivered through the curriculum as a creative means of supporting literacy and numeracy.
- Enterprise skills
- Enhancing literacy skills.
- Creative music projects providing accreditation in key skills
- Developing confidence, emotional intelligence and facilitation skills.
- Non-school attenders obtaining a GNVQ in Drama

The study reported a 'consistent recognition and confidence in commissioning organisations in the development of skills through participatory arts'. However, the author acknowledged that there can be difficulties in agreeing the boundaries of project design and made the following recommendations:

- Commissioners should understand how the project will engage participants to change attitudes, develop interests, embed learning, personal skills and confidence.
- Artists should engage participants freely in the creative process, to develop skills, interests and confidence.
- Commissioners should: meet the individual interests and needs of participants.
- Artists should: encourage interests and discover talents in individuals
- Participants should be able to take something away at the end of the project that demonstrates their achievement; be able to share their achievement with significant others and if they have developed a particular interest, have the opportunity to continue the activity after the end of the project

Women at the HeArt was a Thames Valley Partnership project, funded by Arts Council England, The Monument Trust and Thames Valley Probation. The project worked with 6 artists who practiced a range of art forms. Alm Associates (2014) state that positive outcomes for women taking part in the project included being able to recognise their own skills and abilities, a raised awareness of personal strengths and capabilities and increased confidence to try new activities including the use of tools and equipment.

It was noted that throughout the project there was no pressure or expectation for participants to achieve a particular skill or to meet a learning objective. It notes that the women were encouraged to make their own choices and were enabled to 'just be in a creative space'. The study claims that this approach enabled women participants to take from the project 'what they needed'. Furthermore, for many of the women having a safe place in which to explore and engage with high quality art enabled skill development, increased confidence and achieved a greater recognition of personal strengths and capabilities. Moreover, women overcame an 'established pattern of 'not doing' because of a fear of 'getting it wrong'. It was noted that when women experienced difficulties or felt that their 'art work was going wrong' that experienced artists supported a process of perseverance. This resulted in the women becoming more resilient, less fearful of mistakes and 'more resourceful in overcoming difficulties'.

Inspiring Change was a co-ordinated programme of arts interventions that ran in 5 Scottish prisons (Barlinnie, Greenock, Polmont, Shotts and the Open Estate) throughout 2010. The programme partnership consisted of Creative Scotland, Motherwell College, Learning Centre staff located in prison establishments, the Scottish Prison Service, and the National Galleries of Scotland, Citizens' Theatre, Traverse Theatre, Scottish Opera, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Ensemble, National Youth Choir of Scotland. The project aimed to:

stimulate offenders' engagement with learning; improve literacy skills and to demonstrate the potential of the arts to support the process of rehabilitation.

The programme worked across 5 prisons to deliver 12 projects which included: The Scottish Ensemble's Music for Change project involving 25 young men who worked alongside the Scottish Ensemble's Artist in Residence; The National Youth Choir of Scotland (NYCoS) project Voice Male with 16 young offenders and The Citizens Theatre led 16 women in a 6-week intensive project titled A Woman's Place in which the women explored their role in society through drama, music and song writing, textiles and design.

Data collection with participants demonstrated that the majority of prisoners felt that school had not provided 'positive learning experiences' and found that engagement with Inspiring Change had enabled them to learn in manners which 'suited them and encouraged them to achieve their goals' (Anderson et Al, 2011). Moreover, prisoners considered arts as 'more acceptable activities' than those provided via standard prison education programmes and as such were more motivated.

It was also noted that learning achieved through taking part in Inspiring Change built upon participant's strengths 'both in terms of arts and verbal and written skills' that were embedded in the working practices. The recognition of existing skills and the use of current knowledge as a point of departure for prisoners was a significant motivator. Participants commented:

'if you've got somebody encouraging you to say you can do these things, you're not the bottom of the rung. You are able to do something'

'I learnt that if I actually put my mind to it I can do a story and put pictures to it'

'they (artists) teach you to work together, to be creative and enthusiastic'

The study claims that participation in Inspiring Change built prisoners' confidence 'through growing a sense of their potential and ability to achieve'. It also attributed success to an 'outsider's' belief in their abilities, along with an increased ability to judge themselves more positively. Moreover, the study found that growth in confidence led to an increase in other skills and some participants had acquired skills 'which they felt they could use for work or develop further in training'.

Arad (2013) were commissioned to evaluate the Reach the Heights programme, a Welsh Government initiative aimed at reducing the number of young people in Wales aged 11-19 years not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET. Over 9000 young people took part in the programme across 73 individual projects. All projects encouraged young people to take part in participatory arts. Projects were divided into two specific themes: participation; and training. The evaluation had a specific emphasis on evidencing skills, including soft skills and improved confidence.

The programme involved a wide range of art forms, with the most common forms being music, visual arts, theatre/drama and craft and design. Some control was given to young people concerning deciding arts forms within project design, in other instances projects centred on arts based skills which are reflected within disciplines. Examples provided included: visiting visual arts galleries whereby young people developed an understanding of the many occupations on offer within the arts including: curating; marketing; technical aspects, interpretation and education; another project focussed on developing skills for entry into the music industry.

The study found that participants obtained a range of 'soft skills which enhanced employability including: time management; taking responsibility; and developing creative solutions to problems. Some projects also offered accredited programmes which provided practical and accredited skills for future careers. The set targets for achievement of Basic Skills and Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications were all exceeded with 953 young people gaining qualifications.

A key element of success was focussing on the emotional wellbeing of vulnerable young people as well as their 'aspirations and skills. Furthermore, project representatives stated that arts-based projects provided a more 'comfortable' route into education and training as many of the target group were not interested in formal learning. As stated by one project leader:

The work is stimulating and can be adapted for individuals, reflecting their own styles and interests. Young people who are used to being academic 'failures' can find that they are good at things and find more appropriate ways of expressing themselves. The art work they produce can alter stereotyped opinions of what they are capable of doing. By exploring their creativity they learn more about themselves and have a better chance of realising their potential.'

It was also acknowledged that practising artists in mentoring roles proved to be positive role models with 'whom young people could identify' as they were not considered to be 'authority figures' and were able to provide empathetic support. The tenacity and resolve of the artist in persisting to offer skills also resulted in building respect within participants. A project lead commented:

'The artist's systematic approach to delivering practical art skills and associated practical and soft skills has sensitively introduced a range of transferable skills to the young people.'

In relation to the development of soft and employability skills it was noted that the 'arts are very social and require teamwork and interaction'. Effective engagement in the projects required young people to improve timekeeping, attendance and communication, all noted as soft skills which would support employability.

Participants engaged in the training projects stated that they wanted to: 'to learn new arts-based techniques for engaging groups of vulnerable young people; gain new transferable skills to use in their current (and potential future) careers; and meeting other trainers and those engaged in delivering activities with young people'. They stated this would 'allow them to exchange ideas and good practice and develop new contacts for future employment.

The study concluded that the programme had improved confidence, team working, decision making and listening skills, and that using the arts as a method of engagement had improved relationships with peers thus improving time management, acceptance of responsibility and improved interaction.

Digital and Creative Technology

Digital Arts and Older People, What is Distinctive about Working with Older People Using Creative Technology (Randall, 2012) was commissioned by the Baring Foundation as a roundtable discussion document aiming to inform the Foundation's funding priorities. It considers the different domiciliary aspects of working with older people and acknowledges that these have a bearing on the scope for participatory arts projects. The author asserts that engaging with participatory arts projects gives older people new skills and that for organisations and artists using digital art this claim is 'even more powerful'. At the time of publication 55 per cent of UK citizens were aged over 65, and over 70 per cent of people over the ages of 75, have never used the internet

(Office for National Statistics, 2010). The author argues that the specific benefit of creative technology and digital arts projects with older people provides transferable skills. However, the organisations and artists who were consulted for this study claimed that skill development was not the only reason they embark on projects with older people, highlighting reasons being to 'break down the linguistic and confidence related barriers which contribute to the digital divide'.

The majority of organisations from this consultation do not focus upon the digital skills agenda when engaging older people in their programmes. They define technology as a 'creative hook' and a 'practical aid' to communication and also in alleviating loneliness. But state that older people soon learn to confidently navigate Skype and social networks. Furthermore, it is claimed that digital arts and creative technology form a 'rich seam' for intergenerational work which enables sharing across age ranges in language, skills and knowledge about digital technology.

In conclusion, this paper argues that the use of digital arts with older people will continue to increase in 'relevance and importance' and that a key part of this field will be 'the ability of digital artists to overcome, challenge and explore these issues'.

Craft

QA Research was commissioned in 2011 to review the impact of Fine Cell Work (FCW), a social enterprise who works with prisoners to develop and practice professional craft skills. The products created by prisoners are sold by FCW to designers, museums and the general public. FCW works with 400 prisoners yearly with a minimal drop-out rate of 18% of both long and short term prisoners.

The initiative has been successful in enabling a sense of achievement, building confidence and resilience, and drive and determination. It also developed skill sharing opportunities between inmates through which they compare techniques, improve stitching competences whilst building teamwork processes and motivation.

The researchers asked participants to describe new skills they had developed as a result of their involvement in FCW, apart from obvious craft skills they cited:

1. Patience
2. Staying calm and relaxed
3. Increased motivation
4. Perseverance
5. Increased self confidence
6. Learning to be proud of achievements
7. Increased concentration
8. Learning to finish something they have started
9. Time keeping
10. Working to a deadline (when working on commissions)

Furthermore, participants planned to use their new skills in an 'entrepreneurial way' upon release including having a hobby and also generating income.

The study concluded that FCW had assisted prisoners to think more 'optimistically and constructively' about planning for life on release and aligned this success to the BIS report 'Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation' which 'underlined the importance of equipping offenders with employment skills'. It was

recommended that FCW argues that the skills obtained within their programmes are 'vocational' and should link these skills to employability.

Dance

Miles and Strauss (2008) evaluated the impact of The Academy 'a radically intensive, dance-led programme for young offenders and people at risk of offending in a community setting'. This report summarises the programme's results during its first two years and states that the programme 'makes a major positive impact'. Data collection throughout the evaluation process indicated that participants are less likely to re-offend and that on completion they had higher than expected rates of taking up education, training and employment. It is argued that these 'hard outcomes' are underpinned by 'measurable increases in participants capacity to learn and a development of key life skills'. Moreover, it is recommended that policy maker recognise the 'serious role that professional appointed and properly targeted arts interventions can play in helping to address the problem of youth offending'.

It is claimed that dance as 'both context and mechanism' is crucial to enabling change. Highlighted are the standards demanded by the Academy which are professional in discipline, performance and a supporting environment. Participants' learning is described as being 'informed by a non-verbal and dance mediated processes' which include mental control 'encapsulated in 'focus and 'embodied confidence'. Furthermore, it is claimed that the public performance aspect brings about the confidence, responsibility and a sense of achievement.

Within the evaluation remit was a focus on the assessment of learning outcomes which was achieved by measuring changes in participants' capacity to learn. Cited is Stephenson (2007) who proposes that low levels of educational attainment in young offenders and young people at risk of offending is well documented. Also cited are Miles and Clarke (2006) who argued that arts interventions are 'particularly effective at providing a bridge to learning for people detached from or alienated traditional pathways'.

This study found that the Academy programme engages reluctant learners and 'fosters crucial basic and soft skills' and its results suggest that the programme influences young peoples' decision to return to mainstream schooling and older participants to enter Further Education or employment. A limitation to this study was the inability to track participants over a longer period to gauge sustained impact.

Focus and Embodied Confidence are discussed in relation to skill development. Focus is described as 'a framing concept for the dance led learning experience' and an 'all-encompassing, cultural approach to learning and behaviour' which emphasises the importance of dance as both a mental and physical discipline. It is argued that focus is an 'essential foundation for clear thinking, perspective taking and considered decision making'.

Embodied confidence is considered to describe 'observed improvements in participants' abilities to self-present in appropriate and desirable ways which are conducive to mature and productive social relationships'. The study considers shifts in behaviour or demeanour including making eye contact, using positive body language, listening and asking questions, having a can do attitude, as indicators of having improved embodied confidence. It is argued that adding the term 'embodied' to the often cited claim of participatory arts programmes increasing confidence per se, offers the ability to make a more accurate measurement of the changes taking place.

The authors also state that a dynamic feature of the Academy programme was its ability to 'sponsor or re-awaken ambition'. This was attributed to the building of motivation and confidence that resides in personal

achievement and public performance. It is claimed that a mutually supportive group provided participants with a 'new sense of purpose and the belief that they could reach beyond their personal circumstance.

In conclusion, the study found that outcomes for participants were 'overwhelmingly positive' and had delivered measurable increases in capacity to learn and soft skills which can be linked to 'favourable' hard outcomes in criminal justice terms.

The main key learning outcomes for participants included: increased confidence and self-awareness; more flexibility and self-control; the capacity to cope with and adapt to challenges; improved communication skills; a willingness to reflect on and address personal strengths and weaknesses; and the ability to transfer learning between contexts.

The success of the programme was attributed to participants being treated as 'worthy individuals in a supportive and non-judgemental environment' and a 'highly disciplined and creatively challenging activity, informed by real-world professional production values'. Learning in this context is demonstrated non-verbally through the physical and performing aspects of dance requiring: mental and physical control; teamwork; and emotional engagement.

Creative Writing

Hurry et al (2007) evaluated the Write to be Heard creative writing programme commissioned and funded by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). The project aimed to: encourage hard-to-reach offenders to engage with education and arts opportunities in prison; to bring new and innovative organisations into prisons; and to investigate how to create a support network to help arts organisations working in prisons improve the services they offer

The authors refer to the strategy document 'Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation' (NOMS, BIS, 2011). This strategy recognises that the improvement of literacy and employability skills is central to rehabilitation and reducing re-offending agendas. The role of the arts was acknowledged as a key part of the rehabilitation process as it can encourage self-esteem and communication skills. Furthermore it states that 'future employment or self-employment in, or associated with, the creative arts and crafts can for some represent a potential pathway to life free of crime'.

Participants in this study were a mixture of experienced writers, inexperienced and nervous writers and people who described themselves as 'non writers'. Data analysis demonstrated that:

- 92% agreed or strongly agreed that they had learnt new writing skills
- 87% felt the workshop had given them confidence to write
- 82% agreed that the workshop made them think about themselves
- 70% could imagine themselves doing well out of prison

Comments from participants demonstrated feelings of referred to a feeling of inclusion and engagement which were mapped to 'pro-social skills':

'Made me feel part of the group'

'A positive course run by a group of positive and driven people...with a diverse group of (prisoners)'

'The opportunity to express ourselves in a positive manner. There are no opportunities to do this at any other time in this prison'

Although Write to be Heard was primarily a literacy project the study found it developed a number of soft skills, including: critiquing skills; interviewing skills, and mutual support skills.

The authors claim that creative writing programmes such as Write to be Heard 'clearly resonate with the adult literacy core curriculum'. They found that learners progressed from Entry Level to Level 2 by improving their ability to use written and spoken language: being able to listen and read increasingly complex and abstract language: and they expanded their repertoire of vocabulary, genres, registers, grammar and punctuation. Furthermore, the workshops improved speaking and presentation skills.

In conclusion, the study found that project increased the possibility of employability in the form of skills and motivation to work and confidence to relate constructively to others in the work setting.

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