



MAKE ART HAPPEN EVALUATION REPORT



Evaluation Report
BY SMALL MEANS BIG

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1. Executive Summary:

1.1. About

This report presents the findings of a two-year evaluation which mapped and examined the impacts of the Make Art Happen programme, designed and delivered by Helix Arts. [Make Art Happen](#) was conceived to be a knowledge transfer programme which, by deploying a training and development model, enables communities to commission and manage their own high quality arts activity. The programme is designed to build skills and knowledge which are then applied practically, through an artist commissioning process and the management of a participatory arts project.

The project was evaluated using the Realistic Evaluation methodology which aligns closely with Theories of Change. Realistic Evaluation sets out to identify outcomes that are deeply rooted in the contexts and mechanisms of the project under investigation. Through individual case studies, the method identifies why the project works at a local level and what can be learnt about the project as an entire concept. This method was used to answer the following evaluation questions:

- Has Make Art Happen enabled organisations and individuals to develop, fundraise for and manage participatory arts projects?
- Could Make Art Happen become an effective business model for Helix in terms of reaching its strategic aims?
- What else happened? What other evidence can be captured that tell us about the nature of participatory arts projects in third sector organisations?

1.2 Key Achievements of Make Art Happen

1.2.1 Outputs

- 12 training programmes involving 114 individual sessions
- Engaged and supported 87 trainees
- Commissioned 16 participatory arts projects
- Provided employment for 26 artists
- Delivered 81 arts workshops
- Engaged over 200 participants
- Enabled 8 of the 12 projects have continued to deliver arts programming in their community

1.2.2 Outcomes

Analysis of the Realistic Evaluation Case Studies has gathered strong evidence of impact under the following three key themes:

- Voluntary capacity is increased, new volunteers are engaged and the motivations, understanding and resilience of existing volunteers are developed. Volunteers who might otherwise have remained a passive resource to their communities are nurtured and their confidence is galvanised through an active process.
- Artists are supported to develop their practice and professional skills. This is already leading to an increase in participatory arts activity; and to an increase in the quality of those activities, with potential for long term impacts
- Strategic aims and objectives of funders across many sectors are met at differing levels through Make Art Happen with a proposition for new models and mechanisms for interventions in community development and health & wellbeing.

1.3 Make Art Happen Impacts

1.3.1 Participatory Arts Development and Fundraising at an Organisational Level.

Organisations including host, commissioners and the places where trainees delivered participatory arts projects have benefitted from increased capacity in terms of the skills, abilities and knowledge base of volunteers and staff. The project has been successful in developing new networks of volunteers with shared interests and provides a much needed platform or function for galvanising existing interest in participatory arts. The project could be described as a producer and an enabler of 'bridging capital' and invests in developing knowledge and understanding which has helped to build consensus in the formation of plans and in local organising.

1.3.2 Participatory Arts Development and Funding at an Individual Level

The most prominent success of the Make Art Happen project is the development of individuals. The training course, provides a thorough grounding in participatory arts development and management. Most importantly the course provided opportunities for trainees to develop research and analysis skills concerning the needs and wants of community focussed organisations and their end users. Trainees cited the most impactful element of the project to be the live arts delivery. Their knowledge and skills are deployed through this live project and artist commission. Evidence of impact on knowledge and skills evidenced in the quality of artists briefs, proposals and live projects.

1.3.3 Make Art Happen as a business model

Make Art Happen has taken a longitudinal development approach which has brought forth many options for delivering the project in the future. It was initially conceived that Make Art Happen could be bought as an off the shelf product which could be easily delivered for a fee or as a commission. The longitudinal developmental approach taken by Helix Arts has now produced a programme of support for communities and organisations which is structured but also flexible. There are options for delivering 'lite' and digital versions of the programme which would provide knowledge and understanding of the core elements of participatory arts development and management. However, building on the projects impacts on individuals and communities, Make Art Happen should be seen as a component of Helix Arts' core business case to key funders and strategic investors.

2. Introduction

This report presents the findings of a two-year evaluation which mapped and examined the impacts of the Make Art Happen Programme, designed and delivered by Helix Arts. Helix Arts provide a brokerage or bridging function which enables organisations and communities to experience high quality participatory arts. Their main aim is to aid the cultivation of participatory arts programmes which add value to and address the needs of organisations and their service users. Their practice is underpinned with providing new and interesting contexts for artists working within the socially engaged sphere. The Make Art Happen programme was devised at a time of extreme budget cuts on Local Authorities which was, and continues to be causing a negative effect on arts development at a community or neighbourhood level.

After witnessing the effect of funding cuts to the arts in the North East, Helix Arts identified a need to create a programme of support for communities who were at risk of having no opportunity to engage in arts activities specifically tailored to their needs and interests. They decided to diversify the manner in which they support communities to access and experience participatory arts. [Make Art Happen](#) was conceived to be a knowledge transfer programme which, by deploying a training and development model, enables communities to commission and manage their own high quality arts activity. The programme is designed to build skills and knowledge which are then applied practically, through an artist commissioning process and the management of a participatory arts project.

The programme is now in its third year of activity and has developed considerably since the first iteration. There have been many impacts on people, neighbourhoods, artists and arts development models. In evaluating Make Art Happen's progress Small Means Big have attempted to capture key themes which acknowledge the programmes developmental process and where it can have its most significant impacts in the future. Throughout the evaluation process the Realistic Evaluation was applied. This process is explained more in Section 3.

This report should be of interest to: The Arts and Cultural sector, in particular those with an interest in participatory arts and socially engaged practice; arts commissioners and funders, Strategic Partnerships, especially those tasked with regeneration, engagement or neighbourhood renewal programmes; artists and cultural producers; and community and voluntary organisations seeking capacity building initiatives.

Key Outputs of the Make Art Happen Programme

- 12 training programmes involving 114 individual sessions
- Engaged and supported 87 trainees
- Commissioned 16 participatory arts projects
- Provided employment for 26 artists
- Delivered 81 arts workshops

- Engaged over 200 participants
- Enabled 8 of the 12 projects have continued to deliver arts programming in their community

3. Evaluation Methodology

3.1 Evaluation Questions

- Has Make Art Happen enabled organisations and individuals to develop, fundraise for and manage participatory arts projects?
- Could Make Art Happen become an effective business model for Helix in terms of reaching its strategic aims?
- What else happened? What other evidence can be captured that tell us about the nature of participatory arts projects in third sector organisations?

3.2 Realistic Evaluation Method

Make Art Happen was evaluated using the Realistic Evaluation Methodology pioneered by Pawson and Tilley, which is considered to be a well tested methodology within the Third Sector. Realistic Evaluation is driven by the desire for greater validity and utility of evaluation findings. Closely aligned with Theories of Change, Realistic Evaluation sets out to identify outcomes that are deeply rooted in the contexts and mechanisms of the project under investigation. Through individual case studies, the method identifies why the project works at a local level and what can be learnt about the project as an entire concept.

Make Art Happen took place in community settings each having differing inputs to the programme including: contexts, motivations of cohorts, motivations of community organisations and strategic outcomes. The evaluation approach was to consider what works for whom in what circumstances, by scrutinising contexts and mechanisms and how they attribute to project outcomes whilst testing the overall hypothesis that skills transfer from Helix Arts to local communities would improve and increase high quality participatory arts activity in the North East of England.

This study aimed to demonstrate through qualitative data that Make Art Happen was responsible for the outcomes it witnessed over the two- year evaluation period. Make Art Happen was closely examined through six case studies and its findings tested with the wider programme cohort. This enabled the researchers to understand what ignited or fired the changes (mechanism) that were seen in the project outcomes.

Context Mechanisms and Outcomes were analysed in Make Art Happen using the following framework:

- **Context:** Who is the host or strategic investor and what are their aims? Who are the trainees, their motivations, their background and experience? What skills and experience to Helix bring to this situation?
- **Mechanism:** What was unique about the training process, the artist recruitment process, and the participatory arts test/pilot? How were motivations of all those who provided input to the process met?
- **Outcomes:** What happened in each setting and how does this relate to the programme overall?

3.3 Context, Mechanism and Outcomes of Make Art Happen

3.3.1 Context:

The context or conditions in which projects take place are crucial to their success. When describing context in relation to Realistic Evaluation we are describing the special ingredients or elements needed to make the project activity work well and be successful. Make Art Happen is a knowledge transfer programme grounded in the high level of expertise held by Helix Arts and its staff, which is considered as exemplary within the participatory arts sector. The knowledge base of Make Art Happen's training team comes from practical application of arts projects with communities, longstanding experience of artist brokerage, and arts development. Helix Arts is significantly networked in the North East in both the arts and third sector, and has insight into strategic concerns and programmes across the region. Helix Arts has also developed a database of artists to draw on and their status within the sector making them a desirable organisation for artists to work with.

The evaluation found that Make Art Happen worked best when volunteer trainees demonstrated a high level of motivation both for developing their own skills and for building capacity in their communities. The study found that trainees who want to make a difference in the lives of other local people and their neighbourhood delivered the most successful live projects. Also, their involvement in participatory arts was continued after the MAKE ART HAPPEN training was completed.

Make Art Happen attracted a number of highly motivated individuals who were already active volunteers in their community and had ambitions for their volunteer roles. Retention within

programmes was greatest when aims and motivations of trainees mapped to those of the host organisation or commissioner; and when courses are specifically tailored to meet the needs of those participating. Projects were also successful when underpinned by or had synergy with local development and regeneration strategies.

Make Art Happen collaborated with a number of host organisations that offered the project to their volunteers, staff and service users. It also developed an open recruitment offer to projects funded via strategic funds or initiatives. It appeared that Make Art Happen accomplished more when the hosts or funders understood the possibility of participatory arts to deliver the outcomes they wished to make for their service users and communities. Success can also be attributed to stability of organisations in the voluntary sector in a time of austerity. For example, the host organisation Bill Quay Farm's had limited internal staff resources and were operating under pressurised conditions due to funding fragility. These conditions could have undermined the project's impact on the organisation itself. Conversely MAKE ART HAPPEN contributed to another host, The Old Lowlight overall resilience and ability to deliver existing/core aims and purposes due to the projects alignment with internal strategy.

The live projects developed and managed by trainees attracted a number of established and highly skilled artists from the North East. Moreover, some trainees who are practicing artists also developed skills and insight into the possibilities presented by working in local community settings. The live projects were most fruitful when they offered an open but exciting brief that motivated artists to develop original responses.

3.3.2 Mechanism:

The Make Art Happen training course was of a very high quality and provided an in depth and thorough preparation in all areas needed to develop and manage a participatory art project. The course content was considered by some trainees as being sometimes too detailed. Nonetheless, it undoubtedly developed the skills of trainees to deliver volunteer-led participatory art projects. There was little or no feedback concerning a lacking of knowledge, and any criticism was focused only on the intensity of the course and the level of commitment needed to complete it.

Helix Arts supported all the artist recruitment processes and were able to continue to offer guidance throughout the live project delivery. Although some trainees are now delivering arts projects independently, the continued support of Helix Arts at this stage of the Make Art Happen life cycle must be considered to be an influencing factor for success. Artists working in live projects all described that they found the creative briefs offered attractive, but that the opportunity to work in association with Helix Arts was also a factor in their decision to apply.

Trainees attribute positive outcomes to applying their skills, developed through training, to a live project. The majority of those interviewed described the live project as crucial to their satisfaction levels and maintaining their motivation. It proved to trainees that they could deliver work with an artist in their community, and that the project could have tangible impacts. Not everything went

smoothly for trainees in all cases, but this also created positive learning experiences. The commitment to real participants kept the trainees motivated and engaged.

Helix Arts developed a process or method for Make Art Happen that assured all of those involved in the programme would achieve with their personal ambitions. The trainees witnessed the impacts of their efforts in their local communities, artists were offered exciting propositions and contexts to create work and host organisations or investors had their aims achieved to some extent.

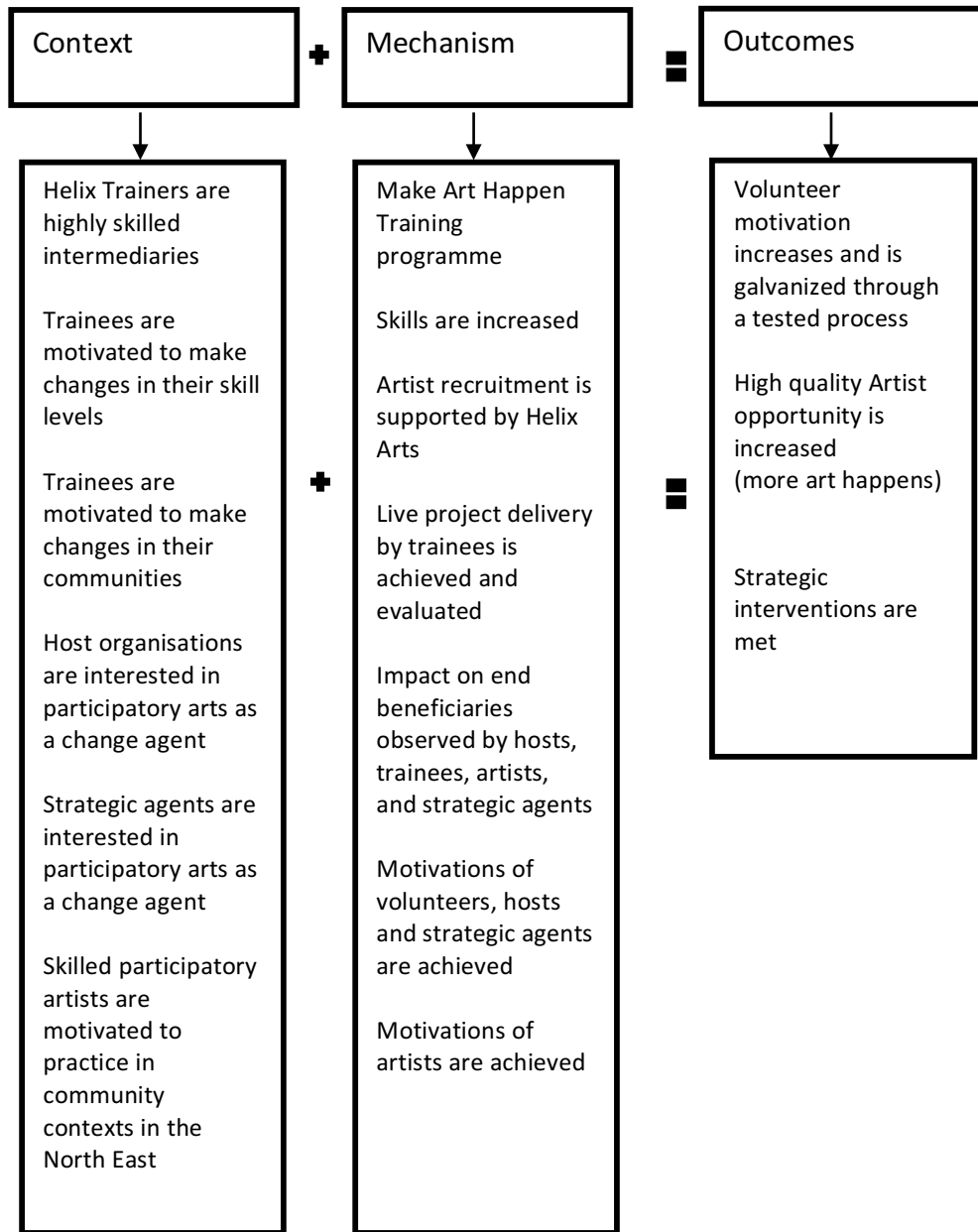
3.3.3 Outcomes

A range of positive outcomes was achieved at individual, case study and programme levels. And experiences of individuals, which offer specific learning points, are described in Section 4. Analysis of case studies and all supporting data demonstrate three key thematic outcomes which were prominent across the programme:

1. Increases volunteer motivation which is galvanised through a tested and active process
2. Offers and increases good quality development opportunities for artists
3. Develops outcomes and outputs for a number of local and regional strategies.

Realistic Evaluation Case Studies summarised in Section 3 and are attached in full at Appendix 1.

3.3.4 Make Art Happen in the Realistic Model



3.4 Data Capture

The evaluation team worked closely with the Helix Arts to align evaluation instruments with operational and quantitative instruments used outside of the Realistic Evaluation model. A series of instruments were designed to collate evidence in case studies, some applied by the evaluators independently and others used by the Helix Arts programme team.

Data Capture Instruments

- Organisational Diagnostic Tool – Designed by Helix Arts to understand organisational readiness and resources along with need and motivations.
- Pre and Post training project skill survey – Designed together with Helix Arts staff and distributed by an e-survey tool
- End of training focus group notes
- Post Live Project Survey – Designed by SMB and distributed by an e-survey tool
- Follow up phone and face to face semi structured interviews with a sample of trainees from each case study
- Observations by SMB at training sessions and live project delivery
- Phone interviews and face to face semi structured interviews with artists
- Face to face interviews with Helix Arts staff including: trainers, project manager and Helix Director
- Cross cohort focus group

4. The Make Art Happen Programme

4.1 Make Art Happen Cycle

Make Art Happen involves a considerable level of input prior to delivering a full training programme. A significant time investment of brokerage, research and development is made by Helix Arts to ensure that the potential host organisation or strategic partner has a sufficient level of resources to support the programme. Care is taken to ensure that trainees are able to fulfil the course commitments and/or Helix can make adjustments to delivery to accommodate specific needs. Also, a first stage diagnostic ensures that the host organisation understands why participatory arts can achieve desired outcomes for their end beneficiaries or community. This investment of time also allows Helix Arts to understand all motivating factors for taking part in the project. Time is also taken to meet face to face with potential trainees so that no one comes to the programme without a personal introduction to their trainer and vice versa. This opportunity also allows for testing trainee's pre course skill levels and their personal assumptions of knowledge pertaining to the course content.

The Make Art Happen programme takes around 6 months to complete. There are 8 sessions which enable the development of skills and knowledge, these are followed by a two month planning period before the art project is implemented. The commitment for Trainees is to attend 8 sessions and to complete an element of self-directed learning. They must also be able to liaise with their cohort trainees outside of the training sessions in order to complete team tasks.

As part of the course, trainees carry out a needs assessment with the beneficiaries or community they aim to support. An artist brief is developed and circulated, which stipulates that Helix Arts is supporting the process as part of the Make Art Happen project. Trainees take part in recruitment and selection, and support the live project in situ.



The Make Art Happen Cycle

4.2 Summary of Realistic Evaluation Case Studies

Following the Realistic Evaluation model, the evaluation team gathered data from a series of cohort based case studies which set out to determine the successful attributes of the Make Art Happen Context i.e. the situations where it works well; the methodology applied in individual cases; and the outcomes of each case.

SITE: Bill Quay Farm	POSTCODE/LOCAL AUTHORITY: Gateshead
CONTEXT: Bill Quay Community Farm, is a 25 acre working farm and free visitor attraction, located in Pelaw, on the outer edge of urban Gateshead. It is a charity, operated by a small paid and volunteer staff team. The farm provides educational programmes for schools, families and the local community, an accessible green space and it preserves a number of rare animal breeds. The farm was operated by Gateshead Council up to 2013 when it was transferred to community ownership as an alternative to closure. The farm had some previous relationship with arts activities, and arts development is included in the organisation's development strategy.	
METHOD: Recruitment included 1 member of BQF staff, 2 existing volunteers and 3 further trainees, including a local practicing artist from the local community. Another 3 people from across the city region joined the programme through open call, which the farm hoped might help to attract new volunteers through offering a new way of engaging with its work. Motivations of trainees were diverse and varied from wishing to support the farm itself in whatever way might be helpful; to contributing to their local area through potential professional development in the arts (to support existing job roles or potential freelance employment); to the desire to develop more generic/transferrable project management skills.	
OUTCOMES: The course was well attended with a high level of active communication between group members between sessions and a strong sense of group identity and common purpose. At the project stage 6 group members dropped out for unavoidable personal reasons. This left 3 people to deliver a programme designed to be delivered by a larger team, creating some tensions and challenges for the remaining team. The team recruited Nicola Lynch, an experienced artist whose work focuses on "the process of making, the playful act of creation" to produce a series of collaboratively designed mosaic pieces for siting in the Farm's grounds, though a programme of workshops with local people, including older people and families. These were produced to a high standard through a good process for participants.	

The farm staff member used her skills to develop plans for participatory arts and Bill Quay Farm now offers twice-monthly arts and crafts activities as part of its Events offer. One trainee (with no continued relationship with the farm) was making plans to develop and run community crafting workshops in her own local area, enabling a career change into social enterprise/creative facilitation. A third team member had changed employers: whilst she had initially planned to apply her learning directly in the context of her original job; her new role offered less immediate opportunity to initiate working with artists but her developed understanding meant that she could see potential in less obvious routes, and would consider this in future.

The Make Art Happen programme at Bill Quay Farm highlighted some of the issues for Helix Arts in working with small third sector organisations in challenging times: organisational stability, and a commitment from volunteers is key to allowing skills development to gain traction.

SITE: South Tyneside Mind

POSTCODE/LOCAL AUTHORITY: Tyneside

CONTEXT:

Tyneside Mind is part of MIND, the leading mental health charity in the UK. Operating from South Shields Library, Tyneside Mind provides a wide range of different services to support people experiencing mental distress across Tyneside.

The project was initiated through conversation at Senior Leadership level and aimed to increase capacity and broaden staff and volunteer skill base to deliver arts activities that would otherwise be unachievable within core business.

METHOD:

The 3 trainees were from Tyneside MIND, one employed full time in a service delivery role; one a student on year long placement as part of her post-graduate course in psychology: the third a was committed volunteer from the local community.

The most significant motivations for the participation were consistent across the group: to provide creative activities for MIND service users, and to explore the potential impacts on wellbeing. Personal professional development with an emphasis on transferable skills rather than the arts per se, was a secondary motivation.

OUTCOMES:

The construction of the training around a real or “live” project was significant motivator for learner engagement. All were keen to see their ideas and learning put into practice and to see tangible outcomes of their work.

Due to changes of work circumstances the team are no longer working together, and two have left MIND, though the third, who worked with the organisation voluntarily continues to do so. All trainees felt that they held the skills and understanding, to use participatory arts in the future, both within the context of mental health service provision or within the wider community. Trainees felt it improved their own self-esteem and confidence. They also reported feeling better networked. The arts project was very well attended throughout and trainees expressed a deep sense of satisfaction in the quality of participant experience and the positive impact of creative journaling on client wellbeing. The project was strongly and positively messaged internally within MIND.

Feedback from trainees and evidence from artist's brief suggests that Make Art Happen has expanded the 'toolbox' or support activities for service users and also for developing service provision. The trainees have combined therapeutic approaches with an arts model in consultation with their users group.

Commissioned artist Susan Warlock felt her role in the project was a positive experience and that the trainees provided professional and organised support. She felt her skills had been improved in working with adults who suffer from mental illness.

SITE: The Cultural Spring

POSTCODE/LOCAL AUTHORITY: Sunderland

CONTEXT:

The Cultural Spring is an ACE-funded strategic Arts Participation Development programme for communities in 10 areas of low cultural provision and high deprivation located across Sunderland and South Tyneside.

The Make Art Happen programme aim was to push forward the community champion's group, local people's level of engagement from taking up participatory opportunities to decision-making, management and delivery; building the skills base in the local area.

METHOD:

13 trainees were initially recruited with 8 regularly attending elements of training – not all from the local area.

Motivations for trainees were diverse although all were attracted by the arts content primarily: whether to gain arts resources for their local communities; to embed the arts into their own organisations; or to develop their own employability skills in the field.

OUTCOMES:

The course attracted 8 trainees and of the initial 8, 6 trainees remained actively engaged with the project throughout the live project process and celebratory events.

Participants felt that they achieved significant levels of personal development, with the live project element providing the most tangible part of this. For one trainee, participation in the programme brought about a step-change in her professional development as an artist, providing her with skills, contacts, network and context to enable a change of career. She has gone on both to be commissioned and to initiate new projects. For another trainee based at Grace House hospice, the project provided both personal and organisational benefit through networking and positioning, as well as bringing a new creativity to her working context. The third team member is participating as a community volunteer and felt her critical perspective was developed alongside her practical skills and that she would be able use them to develop new projects, or contribute to The Cultural Spring when personal circumstances permitted.

The project achieved success in supporting The Cultural Spring's strategic goals by developing, significantly, the skills of key individuals living or working in the target neighbourhoods; by enabling key voluntary organisation to develop its profile as a receptive space for arts and the arts, to the extent that they could advocate for the sector; and by network-building amongst creative and voluntary organisations with immediate benefit and impact.

SITE: The Old Low Light

POSTCODE/LOCAL AUTHORITY: Tynemouth

CONTEXT:

The Old Low Light is a three storey listed building based inside the Clifford's Fort on the Fish Quay in Tynemouth. A former fish warehouse, it was transformed in 2014 as a heritage centre with support from Tyne and Wear Building Preservation Trust, North Tyneside Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The organisation formerly known as The Net is managed by a voluntary organisation. It houses an exhibition space, learning area and acts as a base for guided walks and classes. It supports local arts projects and at the point of joining Make Art Happen, there was an aspiration to support traditional crafts.

METHOD:

11 trainees joined the programme, of which 8 were existing volunteers at the centre. Other participants included a cross referral from another Helix project, the Old Low Light Facilities Manager and a community member.

Motivations for volunteers taking part in the project included a will to engage more people in North Shields in the arts; having a general interest in the arts and art history; filling in time/hobby after retirement; and wanting to develop arts management and curating skills.

The trainees all had positive experiences and although demonstrated a fairly high skill set from the outset, they all developed skills in arts management and artist recruitment.

OUTCOMES:

The training element was well attended with 7 participants completing the course. Three trainees continued to be involved in artist recruitment and project implementation. Reasons for drop out included new employment, education, work and family commitments and illness.

The trainees felt that they had achieved 90% success against their ideal project brief. Also, they gained an understanding of how a delivery team has to be flexible to ensure that a participatory project is achieved within a community context, in a manner that does not “surrender the fundamentals”.

The Old Low Light benefitted from volunteer development and capacity building, and has continued to deliver participatory arts and heritage projects. Although only 3 of the trainees saw the project forward to the live stage and saw it through to completion, they demonstrated competence in planning, recruiting and delivering a participatory project and supporting an artist within the process.

The artist Susan Warlock was attracted to the project because she felt that it set her “challenge” and it could possibly assist her to develop her ‘large scale’ portfolio. She also cited that Helix Arts’ reputation attracted her to apply to deliver the brief.

Longer term impacts include a trainee becoming a trustee of The Old Low Light. Further, another trainee has used his Make Art Happen experience to fundraise a significant sum to support the North Shields Fisherman Project which aims to commemorate the fishermen of North Shields who lost their lives doing their job. Keith Spedding has supported the project through active campaigning and fundraising, and by managing an open recruitment for a public art commission which appointed sculptor Ray Longsdale.

SITE: Bensham and Teams POSTCODE/LOCAL AUTHORITY: Gateshead

CONTEXT:

Bensham and Teams was funded through a successful application to Gateshead Capacity Building Fund. Trainees were recruited via advertisement and were not attached to one organisation as per other case studies. The rationale for open recruitment across community venues was to maximize the reach of the project, thus widening skill bases and developing arts champions across the localities.

METHOD:

5 Trainees for this programme were recruited via advertisement and brought together five volunteers for the training course from the Bensham Grove Community Centre, St Chads Community Centre and Big Local Gateshead and the local GP Surgery Health Programme.

All were active community members who were already committed volunteers in other projects. All stated they wanted to enhance their existing skills and to bring complementary programmes of work to community work in the local area.

OUTCOMES:

All 5 trainees completed the training course. 1 trainee dropped out at the live project stage due to work commitments.

Trainees have now formed the Bensham Teams Art Group and they are continuing to fundraise and to deliver participatory arts project. They have received funds from Gateshead Council for outdoor events using the junk music instruments at the Team Valley Festival, Gateshead carer's event and GP health day and partnered again with the local artist Michael Freeman and Chris Folwell. They also made a successful pitch to Helix Arts for a further participatory arts project raising the 10% of funding required through arts sessions and fundraising activities. One trainee is a volunteer at the local GP surgery and has inspired health professionals from her experience and the surgery is allowing her to run creative session in the practice setting.

The Make Art Happen brief was responded to by Michael Freeman and Chris Folwell. Michael is well known for his 'Junk Music' workshops in which he makes musical instruments from anything from 'dried fruit to plastics'. Chris is a local visual artist who stated this collaboration provided a learning opportunity for both artists, but assisted him particularly in enabling to work with a more established artist and to be active as an artist within his community.

SITE: Birtley and Kibblesworth

POSTCODE/LOCAL AUTHORITY: Gateshead

CONTEXT:

Birtley and Kibblesworth was the first Make Art Happen project to happen through a successful application to Gateshead Capacity Building Fund. Trainees were recruited via an open call. The rationale for open recruitment across community venues was to maximize the reach of the project, thus widening skill bases and developing arts champions across the localities.

METHOD:

The project recruited active and motivated volunteers, some from highly skilled backgrounds. All were motivated to increase their skills and understanding of managing and running arts projects, wanted to make an impact in their local community, and to enhance provision at their respective volunteer bases.

9 volunteers were recruited via targeted advertisement. 7 volunteers completed the training course, 2 left the programme through work commitments. All volunteers were highly motivated and conducted a thorough consultation with residents at Birtley Villas, a sheltered housing scheme in Gateshead. The team were keen to involve an artist in creatively presenting oral histories.

All agreed that the support offered by Helix was remarkable and they had gained a deep insight into the development and management of participatory arts projects. However, they believed the course was a lot to process in a short time and found some elements heavy going.

They worked successfully with Birtley Villas, gaining interest from 35 residents, demonstrating the care and stewardship of the volunteers who undertook the consultation in expressing the aims of the project and possible benefits for residents.

OUTCOMES:

The application to Gateshead Capacity Building Fund demonstrated a well thought out strategy for aligning the possible outcomes of Make Art Happen with a number of local agendas. 9 Trainees for this programme were recruited via advertisement and 7 highly committed volunteers completed the training course.

Post course discussions with volunteers demonstrate that there is still motivation to continue working with the residents at Birtley Villas with voluntary arts activities still taking place.

The recruited artist, Effie Burns, commented on the opportunity presented by the project brief which 'exciting and inviting'. She commented that recent briefs for participatory work had been limiting and of poor quality for socially engaged artists. She felt this brief delivered with the support of Helix Arts enabled her to provide an imaginative response.

4.3 Summary of other projects

SITE: Blakelaw Community Partnership POSTCODE/LOCAL AUTHORITY: NEWCASTLE

CONTEXT:

Developing opportunities for residents to be involved in making decisions about their ward, Blakelaw exists to create opportunities on a 'hyper local' scale. Using participatory art was intended as a hook to engagement could extend their reach and increase participation and engagement.

Blakelaw has successfully funded a range of engagement projects for families and young people. They have used Make Art Happen to extend and enhance this programme.

METHOD:

Those attending the training were local volunteers and young people undertaking work-based training programmes through a local college.

OUTCOMES:

The training was initiated from a strategic planning with Blakelaw Community Partnership management. Volunteers report enhancing their skills although some did not see the relevance of all the training to their planned involvement. They took part in the entire course but both participants and their co-ordinator felt strongly that some of the course content was detailed beyond their needs. This did not deter the volunteers from taking forward a well designed project plan that was very relevant to their participants need, though it perhaps relied heavily on skilled staff supporting the delivery process.

The lead trainee, who participated most actively in the delivery of the project, experienced the greatest level of personal development. She expressed pride in her achievement, and reflected that whilst it had been demanding, she felt her skills base and confidence had increased through the process, beyond her expectations of herself and her perception of her own abilities.

A successful artist-led drama project was delivered with young people from the Blakelaw Ward. This was well attended with positive outcomes for project participants.

SITE: Darlington Red Hall POSTCODE/LOCAL AUTHORITY: Darlington

CONTEXT:

Commissioned by Arts Development Officer within the Local Authority (on behalf of / I partnership with Groundworks, Red Hall Community Centre (Councillor Bob Carson) and Housing) within a very deprived estate in Darlington. Multiple interrelated but clear strategic aims for the Make Art Happen project, were to:

- Build local skills to help to replace the diminishing resources and capacity to directly deliver arts development activity within the local authority.
- Develop the attractiveness of the area as a place for artists and creative
- Use the arts as an instrument for social inclusion, as an element of the regeneration strategy (social and economic) for the estate

METHOD:

All 4 trainees are very local to or resident in the area and are creative practitioners or producers, arts students, or have an arts background. Motivations of participants included:

- The development of specific skill sets: budgeting and project management most cited
- To meet like-minded people and particularly other artists.
- To develop their own creative/artistic practice and career.

OUTCOMES:

An ambitious, multifaceted arts project is planned responding to and showing a strong understanding of local community need in its design. It has received positive local press and media coverage.

Individual trainees report a surge in confidence in their practice and their ability to deliver projects, bolstered by the close working relationships developed through the project.

Artist trainees can see new possible participatory directions for their work, which for some had previously been studio-based; and new routes to creative employment and community employment with links to an artistic practice. One trainee had applied for a role of activities co-ordinator in a care home, to which she hoped to bring elements of her artistic practice, which she anticipated would also be developed within the post. Another trainee reports significant improvement in their own mental health, diminishing social anxiety and increasing personal and professional confidence, through collective working and delivering a project that made a difference in their local community.

The project has built a small local cohort, linked to a wider MAKE ART HAPPEN network, with potential for future collaboration, supporting the local creative community. The quality of the work developed makes it possible to advocate for further creative involvement within cross-sectoral strategies.

SITE: Gateshead Artist Development POSTCODE/LOCAL AUTHORITY: Gateshead

CONTEXT:

A programme specifically devised for and offered to artists living, working and practicing in the Gateshead area with the explicit aim of initiating more artist-led activity and employment within the Borough.

METHOD:

8 artists recruited as both trainees and creative deliverers of MAKE ART HAPPEN live projects. This was a new model for delivery taking into consideration the particular skills and needs of an artist cohort.

Participant motivations were a close match to the concept of the programme - what trainees wanted for themselves directly correlated to commissioning aims; as follows:

- Personal and professional confidence
- Developing a creative support network
- Development of practice

OUTCOMES:

All 8 artists completed the course.

There will be 5 live projects of which three are pairing 2 artists working in collaboration and two as individual artists. All projects appear to offer good development for trainees in terms of interdisciplinarity, public work, process and participatory practice.

Trainees report a significant shift and development in their practice, ambition and confidence. *"I feel like my work is moving in a more coherent direction that is under my own control rather than stumbling along looking for work"*

The project has built critical mass and created an immediate new network concentrated in a local area and trainees feel that it has already established a support structure that will endure beyond the life of Make Art Happen.

SITE: Peregrini Lindisfarne **POSTCODE/LOCAL AUTHORITY:** Northumberland

CONTEXT:

Peregrini Lindisfarne is a landscape partnership project made up of community, voluntary and public sector organisations. It is a strategic cultural development initiative for a large remote rural coastal area in North Northumberland, funded through HLF, with overarching aims around preservation, interpretation and engagement with the landscape.

Primary aims of the Make Art Happen programme were to develop the local skill base in relation to arts and heritage, whilst encouraging participation in the landscape amongst local people.

METHOD:

12 initial recruits, dropping to 4 at the conclusion of the course element. Not all trainees were based in the immediate commissioning area. Of the 12 initial recruits 6 identified as artists.

Three key motivations for trainees were:

- Personal development, particularly confidence-building;
- A desire to promote engagement within the local community (not necessarily arts engagement but community development);
- Arts management experience.

One participant's self-employed activities had a particularly strong relationship with the strategic landscape theme, incorporating geology, heritage and arts practices.

OUTCOMES:

The networking aspect was a particular benefit for locally based participants, but trainees told us that the geography of the area presented an impediment to the project gaining momentum, with participants remote from each other, and some based outside the area.

One trainee, resident in the project area, has recognised the relevance of their existing skills to arts management and has been able to fill the gaps in that previous professional experience. He has tangible plans a number of different arts, heritage and creative crossover projects that will develop his existing social business, with a range of new local collaborators.

Another trainee intends to develop an arts/project space using their new skills and contacts, in nearby Blyth in Southern Northumberland.

SITE: Leisureworks Colour Your Life POSTCODE/LOCAL AUTHORITY: Derwentside

CONTEXT:

Leisureworks is a health and community wellbeing trust dealing with leisure, sports, arts and culture, which has spun out from Local Authority. The Make Art Happen programme was brokered through an existing fruitful working relationship with Helix Arts staff. Aims were linked to capacity-building for user-led social prescribing activity for mental health and wellbeing as a sustainability strategy in response to potential loss of future funding; as well as offering extension activity for existing participants who were potentially ready for additional challenge and development.

METHOD:

5 social prescribing service-users were initially recruited as trainees. All were people facing complex difficulties in their lives, and 3 trainees completed the programme with the support of a freelance worker.

Motivations of participants included: an interest in keeping the programme going, for themselves and for others; an interest in greater autonomy and self-determination; new skills development.

OUTCOMES:

The completion of the project required additional investment from the commissioner in order to properly support the participation of people experiencing mental health issues. The practical delivery of the live project was energising and balanced out commitment required for the taught course element.

Artistic outcomes were good, and its public reception very successful. Personal outcomes for trainees were very good: learning was being applied to other voluntary contexts, implying a development in confidence, sense of purpose and feelings of wellbeing through benefitting others. It achieved good visibility and messaging for the host organisation, contributing to its future resilience. The commissioner felt that MAKE ART HAPPEN demonstrated potential as a model for generating community leadership within the arts across a number of sectors.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 Key Thematic Findings

Analysis of the Realistic Evaluation Case Studies has gathered strong evidence of impact under the following three key theme which are explained fully in this section:

- Voluntary capacity is increased, new volunteers are engaged and the motivations, understanding and resilience of existing volunteers are developed. Volunteers who might otherwise have remained a passive resource to their communities are nurtured and their confidence is galvanised through an active process.
- Artists are supported to develop their practice and professional skills. This is already leading to an increase in participatory arts activity; and to an increase in the quality of those activities, with potential for long term impacts
- Strategic aims and objectives of funders across many sectors are met at differing levels through Make Art Happen with a proposition for new models and mechanisms for interventions in community development and health & wellbeing.

5.2 Volunteer motivation increases and is galvanised through a tested and active process

5.2.1 Fulfilling Motivations

Volunteering, and its benefits for both individuals and wider society, has been well studied and scrutinised by successive governments in the UK. Each have brought new perspective and policy for encouraging voluntary action (New Labour, The Third Way 1999, Conservative/Lib Dem Coalitions, Big Society) whilst acknowledging that active engagement through voluntary and community organisations can transform society and that individual voluntary action contributes to that transformation (Howlett and Locke, 1999).

Policies heighten expectations concerning the impact of volunteering on individual development, social cohesion and social need and therefore make it difficult to make claims about the effectiveness of volunteering programmes. In order to assist Helix Arts to understand the impacts on volunteers, their experience and motivations have been compared to 3 domains offered by the book *Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century* (Rochester et Al, 2010) which simplify volunteer motivations:

- Unpaid Work or service – desire to share knowledge, provide leadership or solve problems
- Activism – desire to help other people and address common problems
- Serious Leisure – enthusiasm for a specific form of involvement and commitment to acquiring the knowledge and skills to practice it

The authors argue that each domain ‘captures part of the phenomenon of volunteering’ through which we can explain volunteer motivation and voluntary opportunities. We can also compare the motivations of community or voluntary organisations with those who volunteer. For example, volunteering can be seen as a combination of unpaid work and serious leisure; unpaid work and activism; activism and serious leisure; or a combination of all three ensuring that the motivations for volunteering and the need for voluntary support can harmonise.

Make Art Happen has proven to be a successful vehicle for providing focus and purpose to people who are seeking to channel their energy into community development or action either through the arts or not. Around a quarter of the Make Art Happen cohort were already working in a voluntary capacity in their local area and/or were looking for voluntary experience to increase their knowledge and widen their skill base. Surveys to trainees embarking on training courses demonstrated a high level of motivation in providing voluntary service:

“I am a volunteer with 'Big Local' and was approached about attending this course and the subject was of great interest to me to pursue further”

“I thought the skills would be transferable to other community projects that I would be involved with at work or as a volunteer. The art aspect also motivated me, as I haven't got much experience doing art-based community activities. The course seemed comprehensive and would open my eyes to new ideas”

“I had an interest in art generally through an art history course I was taking, I collect a local Victorian artist’s paintings and I had time on my hands having recently retired”

“To work in a voluntary capacity facilitating arts projects at Grace House”

“Doing something outside of my comfort zone after being a stay at home mother”

“Community based work. Using Art to build communication and relationships”

Trainees who worked with a volunteer workforce could also see potential in the programme for increasing their voluntary skill base and providing new volunteer opportunity.

I was hoping to find a way to pilot professionally run participative arts projects to promote the wellbeing of Tyneside and Northumberland Mind clients as well as upskilling volunteers.

First and foremost, improved wellbeing of the people we work with (our clients). Secondly, a programme that could easily be replicated across other areas. Thirdly, increased capacity through the involvement of volunteers.

I have engaged with and am going to run arts classes with local Volunteer Gardeners - potentially with a view to an exhibition.

“Make Art Happen was an opportunity to learn myself whilst empowering volunteers and service users to learn with me and make this a team effort”

If we make a comparison to the three domains offered by Rochester et al (ibid) there is correlation between volunteer motivation and areas of volunteer work on offer, at the point of entry to the MAKE ART HAPPEN programme.

- Unpaid Work or service – A number of the MAKE ART HAPPEN had retired or changed career direction but acknowledged that they hold useful skills and knowledge that would benefit the voluntary sector and their local community.
- Activism – Most of the cohort wanted to give something back to their local community and were interested in participatory art as a change maker.
- Serious Leisure – The potential of participatory art was highly interesting to a high percentage of the cohort who gave a voluntary commitment of over 6 months to ensuring the training was completed, the live project took place and was evaluated with beneficiaries. Furthermore, some volunteers have developed further arts practice in their local community.

The programme offers skill development; creative activity; the opportunity to make a difference in the community; to use past skills and also apply former skill bases in a new or different model.

5.2.2 Effectiveness of MAKE ART HAPPEN as a volunteering model

As previously stated the extensive literature on volunteering provides a wide number of interpretations concerning what enables or inhibits successful volunteering activity. In assessing the effectiveness of Make Art Happen as a volunteering model and to unpick the components of the programme that enables us to make this claim, we have compared volunteer experience to Bekkers and Arjen's (2014) classification of mechanisms that drive successful volunteering. See table of components below:

Name	Nature	Source	Hypothesis	MAKE ART HAPPEN Component
Awareness of Need	Information	Third Sector Organisations and their service users	Making people aware of the need for contributions increases volunteering	<p>Brokerage with third sector organisations and strategic leaders all working in community development raised awareness of the potential of the programme to meet organisational and service user needs.</p> <p>Motivated volunteers already working in community development became aware of the potential of the programme for increasing their skills and benefiting end users.</p> <p>Brokerage and recruitment strategy also benefited from Helix Arts' reputation as participatory art experts.</p> <p>Information was provided by expert trainers and practitioners.</p>
Solicitation	Social	Social Networks of Volunteers	Asking people directly increases volunteering	Brokerage by volunteers and community organisations increased the likelihood that Make Art Happen would be successful as 'hosts' could solicit those motivated volunteers or had networks already in place for recruitment.
Costs and Benefits	Material	Third Sector Providers	Low costs and high benefits increase volunteering	<p>Make Art Happen costs were covered through existing funding and match funding from strategic partners. No costs apart from time commitment were born by volunteers.</p> <p>High benefits were seen by volunteers in developing desired skills, direct observation of impact on participants and communities, transferable skills and usable</p>

				assets were demonstrated in follow up interviews, motivations for joining the course were met.
Altruism	Material, social and psychological	Benefits to end users or communities	The severity of needs increases volunteering	<p>All projects involved trainees conducting need analysis with potential beneficiaries thus understanding how participatory art could address or meet a need.</p> <p>All Make Art Happen live projects were initiated in situations of high social need. Volunteers could see direct impact of their service on beneficiaries and community organisations.</p>
Reputation	Social	Community Organisations Social Networks	Recognition increases volunteering	<p>Make Art Happen trainees could describe feelings of self worth, which were attributed to a sense of recognition of their commitment to fulfilling the training course, to each other and to their host community/beneficiary.</p> <p>Although at sometimes projects did not go to plan, those who followed the project through to the end, despite any issues along the way had a sense of achievement which had enhanced their personal reputation either with a host community organisation or in their own social networks.</p> <p>There was in interviews and the focus group meeting an overall feeling of accomplishment that fulfilled a personal satisfaction and increased esteem.</p>

<p>Psychological costs and benefits</p>	<p>Psychological</p>	<p>Volunteers</p>	<p>Low psychological costs and expectations of self-rewards increases volunteering</p>	<p>Feedback across all training courses alerted the evaluators and Helix Arts' staff to the high intensity of the training programme and the considerable expectations expected of volunteers in managing a live project. A lot of trainees considered the training to be too in depth and hard work. However, an overall majority acknowledged the quality of knowledge being imparted and could describe an increase of skills, together with a widening of opportunity for their volunteering goals.</p>
<p>Values</p>	<p>Social and Psychological</p>	<p>Volunteers</p>	<p>Endorsement of pro-social values increases volunteering; Endorsement of specific social values increases volunteering for third sector organizations advocating these values</p>	<p>Participatory arts can increase community development, health and well-being, social cohesion and many other societal and individual needs. Those who engage in the facilitation of participatory arts can be considered to hold pro-social values: the final outcome of their involvement should make a positive impact on a specific individual or social need. Motivations for joining the course were in the main intrinsic, although all trainees cited personal motivations for joining the project including those beyond volunteering motivations, such as gaining employment or raising own profiles as artists in this field. The programme by nature is concerned with widening the reach and impact of participatory arts and as such attracts those who hold pro</p>

				social values. The achievement of a live project and witnessing and understanding the impacts of participatory arts on beneficiaries whether deep as seen in Bensham and Teams or light touch through festivals and open call engagement as seen in other projects, ratifies the motivations of volunteers and endorses their values.
Efficacy	Psychological	Volunteers	More effective production of services to recipients increases volunteering	Motivated volunteers have seen their efforts come to fruition through their live projects and are motivated to do more. This is evidenced in Bensham and Teams where a new arts development project has been born out of the MAKE ART HAPPEN course and project and with examples across the programme of individuals using their skills in community art contexts.

5.2.3 Spotlight Case Study on Volunteering

SPOTLIGHT: Geoff Dunlavy

Geoff joined the Make Art Happen programme via a referral from the NTAS programme, Branching Out. He joined the first cohort of trainees at The Old Low Light. He is a highly motivated volunteer and arts professional with considerable experience in both the professional arts and community arts sector. He runs an agency for actors and has developed and managed drama projects for young people. Geoff has a passion for the arts and for helping people. His skill base is high, but at the point of joining the Make Art Happen programme his confidence and self-esteem levels were very low. In recent years Geoff has developed psychosis and schizophrenia, conditions that are controlled by medication, but have devastating effects on memory, sustaining attention, making decisions and synthesising information. A highly motivated and knowledgeable volunteer and professional with a lot to offer the programme, his community and the wider participatory arts sector, Geoff needed support to recapture his confidence and have opportunities to apply his knowledge thus assisting his recovery and reengagement in community life. Whilst other mental health support programmes may assist in recovery, Make Art Happen related specifically to Geoff's pre-illness life and offered the potential to take back control over his future.

Helix Arts offered Geoff the opportunity of long term mentoring in which he shadowed a trainer through a number of training courses, gradually building up confidence to offer support in facilitation and eventually leading sessions. The commitment of the team to assisting Geoff to recapture his self believe has led to significant changes in his ability to lead a full and active life, working closely with arts and community development and applying his skills base. In two interviews over a year apart Geoff attributed his transformation to the skills and commitment of the Helix Arts Team stating specifically that they 'know how to work with people with mental illness' and asserting that their skills in this area should be acknowledged as best practice.

Geoff felt that the long-term commitment of mentoring and the feedback skills of the trainers gave him time to 'think' in a live but unpressured environment. His observations of training courses provided him with the opportunity to consider other people's behaviour in training environments and how to react or deal with sometimes stressful or 'gobby' people in a professional manner. After each session Geoff would 'debrief' with the trainer and this enabled both to reflect on their performance and how they dealt with the training situation. Through observation and feedback Geoff's confidence grew and he gradually began to co-deliver some elements of the programme, buoyed by his mental toolkit built from real and possible scenario planning.

Make Art Happen couldn't offer this level of support to all volunteers but were able to accommodate Geoff and other highly motivated individuals into the programme schedule due to the longevity of funding and project timelines. The team could also see the potential of Geoff to fulfil the aims of the programme in making art happen in communities in the future without the support of Helix Arts' professionals. In just over a year, the support and knowledge transfer provided to Geoff has seen a transformation of his demeanour and confidence and a gradual return to the former motivated volunteer and pre illness professional.

Geoff has achieved a lot one to one support and although he attributes his success to the sensibilities of the trainers, he should acknowledge that the trainers could see that he held efficient talent and knowledge for developing and managing participatory arts projects. The MAKE ART HAPPEN programme and mentoring support enabled him to re-practice and his existing skills whilst keeping him safe and unpressured

In his most recent interview Geoff described how he is now working in both a paid and unpaid capacity with young people, a former passion that he was no longer able to fulfil due to his illness. Working with young people, no matter how rewarding can be noisy and stressful and this environment became an impossibility when Geoff's illness began. The support provided by mentoring has enabled Geoff to develop strategies to 'carry on' despite being in stressful situation. Geoff has been so motivated by his return to youth work that he is now using the fundraising skills to try to support the youth programme after the funding project has ended. Furthermore, he is able to manage a number of commitments to arts projects at the same time; he has recently completed an exhibition with artists from his agency and tried something 'new and fresh' with an arts and crafts project, which he has evaluated. He has also supported Helix Arts Managers in technical roles at both an outdoor project 'Door Dance Wave' and a large scale performance and award ceremony 'Success Stories; at The Sage Gateshead, managing the high pressured and crucial role of autocue. He took on a huge responsibility and managed himself and the situation impeccably. His confidence has grown to take on new commitments and he is enjoying the challenge of new roles both with and without the support of Helix Arts.

Geoff's experience and transformation throughout his involvement in MAKE ART HAPPEN has been quite remarkable. Although it would be impossible to provide one-to-one support to all highly motivated volunteers who embark on the programme, Geoff's experience is to be highlighted in relation to the planning programme aimed at people who wish to improve, or find strategies to assist recovery from, poor mental health. He asserts that Helix Arts has specific knowledge and skills to support people through the effects of long term mental illness and that Make Art Happen is an effective vehicle for regaining confidence and providing a re-entry point into the participatory arts or community development role or volunteering which had been lost to poor mental health.

5.4 MAKE ART HAPPEN is effective in developing the skills, practices and agency of artists to enable more high quality participatory art to be produced.

5.3.1 Supporting Artist's Development

Supporting artists to develop an ambitious, sustainable practice is a currently a key agenda for the arts sector. Arts Council England, numerous philanthropic Trusts and Foundations, development agencies and local authorities acknowledge the importance of this talent development and are keen to identify strategies and programmes that have the potential to enable creative talent to flourish.

Most of the Make Art Happen live projects and training courses have attracted practising artists or those who consider themselves to be artist/practitioners. Artists came from a range of backgrounds including recent graduates, mature students, practising artists and some who are self taught. Some have considerable experience in participatory arts, others had lapsed practice and others wished to develop skills in this area.

Feedback from artist participants demonstrates that Make Art Happen has created tangible benefit - in the following key areas:

- Practice development
- Professional development, employability and employment
- Network development

Commissioners and project partners have recognised this potential and this has led to the development of two programmes in Gateshead and Darlington that have been specifically tailored to meet the needs and wants of artists. with the potential to significantly further contribute to this agenda in relation to participatory arts.

In addition, a number of individuals have been involved across a series of different cohorts, as participants and as commissioned practitioners, with the project offering a unique opportunity to construct their own development trajectory with the support and guidance of Helix Arts staff.

As well as these areas of developmental impact, Make Art Happen seems to have created an effective mechanism for creating a strong sense of agency for many participating artists, who can now see the ways in which they can create their own opportunities with relation to participatory arts practice.

5.3.2 Development of professional skills

Make Art Happen aims to equip teams and individuals with skills to deliver a participatory arts project which include Project Management, Evaluation, Fundraising, Developing an Artist's Brief and Recruitment. The programme was not designed to provide professional development for artists/creative. However, it has proved to be a useful vehicle for creative practitioners. There is a significant overlap between many of the skills and capabilities needed for project management and those skills that individual artists frequently cite as lacking or inadequate in their art school training.

Artists particularly valued the key skills of budgeting and fundraising (where it was included in the course) together with planning and project management methods.

In addition, several elements of Make Art Happen and its learning processes have proved particularly useful to artists for example, being involved in recruitment of artists has been highlighted as by several artists as having value. They felt that by stepping into the role of the commissioner that they have gained a new perspective on how to best present themselves through every aspect of the recruitment process, from proposal writing through to performance at interview.

“I feel more confident in applying for arts jobs, especially having experienced the recruiting process of the course.”

5.3.3 Increasing employability

Artists who participated in Make Art Happen programmes feel that their potential employability has increased in a number of ways. Trainees report that they feel “better equipped and more appropriately skilled” to apply for a range of roles, both as artists and as arts workers (project managers or producers) than prior to participating in the programme. And, that by devising and delivering live projects they now have a demonstrable track record that is critical for being successful in job applications. A number of artists felt that Make Art Happen had provided the essential first foothold to “prove what you can do” and it provides evidence of ability together with a quality experience. Association with Helix Arts and having participated in a Helix Arts-delivered training course is also felt to be useful to artists and commissioners and is considered to be a badge of quality with artists stating that now “people believe in your work”.

5.3.4 Networking

Over and above the training outcomes, a key development outcome for artists that has the potential to deliver accumulated benefit over time has been the opportunity to create multi-layered networks. These networks exist in a number of different contexts:

- **Within the immediate cohort:** meeting like-minded people in the immediate neighbourhood or linked to the same community of interest with whom easy connections can be made, particularly with other artists, establishing a local network of creative people.

“I feel like I have made good connections with others on the programme to be able to sound ideas with or suggest collaborations and also to ask for help from those more experienced.”

- **With people within the arts sector, including practitioners from across different cohorts.** Kathryn Thompson noted that whilst she had had clear ideas of what she wanted to do when beginning her involvement with Make Art Happen, she did not have a point of entry into artistic circles, or know who was making work in similar ways or who might share similar concerns. Make Art Happen created these introductions in a natural way and cross cohort connections have broadened these networks further. Emerging practitioners or those

returning to practice found this of particular value and felt that there is the potential to create a regional community of emerging participatory artists.

“Through MAKE ART HAPPEN I have developed valuable knowledge of other practitioners work. It has given me the opportunity to share and develop ideas”

“ I met a fantastic and encouraging group of fellow artists”.

“I feel far better prepared to engage in joint projects now and I have begun to be active in a network that will support this, in terms of the core group and other contacts made during the course.”

This element is so valued by participants that many have requested a regular regional meet up between all the trainees from the various MAKE ART HAPPEN programmes.

“An annual gathering with presentations on what individuals/groups have achieved would be amazing and make a great chance to network and discuss potential collaborations.”

- **With other organisations**

Artists report that MAKE ART HAPPEN has also provided them with the route to find and “calling card” that legitimises making contact with third sector organisations, local authorities and community agencies.

“I am far more knowledgeable now about different organisations in the local area and how to contact them to begin discussions”.

- **Development of practice**

Through discussion and interviews, many artists have made strong statements about the ways in which Make Art Happen has contributed to the development of their practice. This seems to have hinged around two key aspects: the course framework created a safe social space in which thinking and testing of ideas could happen; and the live project enabled insight and context.

Artists were able to share their work and discuss potential developments in a supportive space. A number of participants are recent graduates and/or mature students who are new to their practice. They considered Make Art Happen to have offered a route to ask key questions such as “How do I make a living?” “How do I develop my practice?”. The live project element enabled practice to be developed and tested with local communities. Kathryn Thompson describes that she saw her previous practice “for fun”, but that Make Art Happen provided a platform and process to shift to a professional identity as an artist.

“To understand the artistic and social capital in the area, the cultural demographics and the possible areas of developmental need and opportunity...this is the start of a longer journey”

Christopher Folwell describes how Make Art Happen has initiated a step change in his approach:

“My practice was chasing jobs, seeing what I could get. MAKE ART HAPPEN created space to formulate a plan, suggested a direction in my practice, further programmes have opened doors to new ways of working.... I have the skills now to engineer an idea for artwork into well thought out and thought provoking public engagements, developing workshops beyond just making something with participants”.

Bethan commented that the course had *“allowed me to be inspired by art again - this course has given me lots of ideas for projects I could do in the future and has also inspired me as an artist to begin making work again”*

“The skills I have developed throughout MAKE ART HAPPEN have impacted me more than I expected. I have felt inspired to begin making art again and have also seriously considered running some arts projects in my local community. I hope that as the project continues and comes to realisation that I will gain the experience to carry out my ideas in the future.”

- **Identifying a new role in the community**

Make Art Happen has had a particular impact on practice in terms of developing an ability to identify spaces and contexts in which their practice would be relevant, and to devise ways to respond to these situations. This has led to the creation of new opportunities and artist-led work that would not otherwise have happened.

“As an artist it gave me an opportunity to have a role in my community that was useful....I plan to launch a pilot programme of workshops with Gateshead residents, from there develop the project into a larger concept including more people to explore issues with social housing.”

“I am really interested in working one on one with people who have ended up isolated as a result of illness to give grounding and a space for them to express their experience through a range of creative mediums including print but also writing and photography”

“when I have completed my MA in August 2017, I hope to run Creative Writing and/or Art and Creative Writing workshops with elders, particularly those with complex physical or mental health needs, focussing on storytelling and self-expression”

“It has given me a great deal of confidence with regards to exploring and approaching possible projects. With another MAKE ART HAPPEN participant we are in the stages of developing drama workshops designed for young people with learning disabilities using textiles, puppetry, storytelling and games. We are currently in contact with local council and schools.”

- **Agency as artists**

The cumulative effect of building understanding, developing networks and increasing confidence (both personal and confidence in artistic practice) together with a detailed understanding of delivery i.e. planning, budgeting, contracting, reporting, has effected sense of agency. For example, those who took part in Make Art Happen state that they are more keen to apply for roles as project managers, workers and artists, but articulate a strong desire to develop and lead their own new programmes of work, alone or in collaboration with other Make Art Happen “graduates”. Crucially they see their next steps as initiating rather than only responding to opportunity generated by others.

“I feel like my work is moving in a more coherent direction that is under my own control rather than stumbling along looking for work”

“ I have the confidence to be able to go and speak to organisations I’d potentially like to work with or people I’d be interested in working with”

“I am more confident now to be able to plan out a project and work collaboratively as well as start to look at independent projects I’m interested in.”

Thus seems very likely that Helix Arts, through training, supporting and developing artists in this way, will have built creative capital in such a way that more good quality participatory work is likely to be **initiated by artists**, with both immediate, and deferred benefit for communities in the region. Many artists have tangible plans already in place.

- **Individuals creating their own education/development paths through engaging in multiple programmes in different ways**

Kathryn Thompson first became involved with MAKE ART HAPPEN through The Cultural Spring’s open recruitment for participants. The timing of the course was key for her, and the offer a close alignment with the skills she had identified for herself as necessary for progression. Kathryn was one of three trainees who remained committed to the conclusion of the course and to the delivery of the artists’ commission project. She subsequently successfully applied for a role of artist within the Leisureworks project. She has described how she hopes to apply her new skills as a freelancer, developing projects reaching non-participating communities and people. She has also begun to deliver a project with a learning disabled group as a direct result of contacts made through Make Art Happen, with the commissioner of that work having expanded their understanding of the potential of participatory arts through their own learning on the course. Her development trajectory is highlighted in a spotlight section below.

Christopher Folwell began his association with Make Art Happen as an artist commissioned in partnership through the Bensham and Teams programme. This project in itself allowed Christopher to initiate a range of new relationships in Bensham, where he had been living for several years; and to recognise new potential for a more genuinely participatory approach to making art with people.

Christopher then went on to take part in the Gateshead Artists MAKE ART HAPPEN cohort, which consolidated the developments in the direction of his work.

5.3.5 Spotlight Case Studies on Artist Development

SPOTLIGHT: Kathryn Thompson

For Kathryn Thompson the MAKE ART HAPPEN provided the springboard to a career change that has successfully accelerated since completion of the course.

Kathryn had been an NHS project manager who had hoped to develop a new creative work direction for some time when the MAKE ART HAPPEN course was brought to her attention. She attended the whole course element of the project and was one of the three core team members in artist project delivery. Despite her existing level of knowledge and experience in project management she found the course challenging and dense in content, but was motivated as it so directly applied to her future aspirations.

Since completing the course she has developed a portfolio of creative project work including workshop delivery for The National Trust; within a variety of community contexts related to the NHS; and has been commissioned as an artist within other MAKE ART HAPPEN cohorts; with *Colour Your Life and MAKE ART HAPPEN Darlington*. In this artist role within the MAKE ART HAPPEN programme she felt that she was able to apply learning from the Cultural Spring project, and was thus better able deliver her brief as an artist, having been in the position of commissioner/organizer, and that the experience of recruiting artists built her ability to present herself and her work as an artist more successfully in interview or pitching contexts.

She feels that her involvement in MAKE ART HAPPEN helped her to value her skills as an artist; to be “clearer, firmer and more professional” in her expectations of herself and those commissioning her, and built her confidence in working in the participatory arts sector. The project management role within the Cultural Spring MAKE ART HAPPEN cohort has informed her own project planning, and her practice, with key learning about both practicalities and finding the “sweet spot” between challenging participants enough but not too much. Most fundamentally she felt that the project “exposed me to experience of working with other artists and practices” for the first time, which she considered critical to her professional development and practice. Amongst other community based creative work, both self-initiated and community commissioned, Kathryn was also employed as part of MAKE ART HAPPEN Darlington artists team, and is currently planning a project “Cultivate for Life” working in Bishop’s Auckland with long-term unemployed men, bringing together woodworking and gardening skills and creativity.

MAKE ART HAPPEN has enabled Kathryn, as an artist, to be better able to understand and meet the needs of a commissioning community group and to create opportunities where they are needed.

SPOTLIGHT: Chris Folwell

Before MAKE ART HAPPEN Chris Folwell's participatory work was limited to one-off workshops and occasional assisting more established artists, including Anton Hecht. Whilst he had enjoyed this way of working he had never had a lot of control within these projects.

The commission opportunity offered by the Bensham and Teams MAKE ART HAPPEN commission was the first project in which he had positioned himself as a potential lead artist, and he was surprised and very excited to be offered the role.

Chris had actually lived in the Bensham area for 5 years, but had very little interaction with the community – he didn't know anyone in the neighbourhood, hadn't made new friends there but "visiting community spaces and meeting the MAKE ART HAPPEN team who were so enormously involved in the community encouraged me to invest in the local community". Through the project, Chris made a link with BIG LOCAL, a community development initiative keen to encourage more community involvement in the arts.

Chris was then invited by Helix Arts to take part in the Gateshead Artists MAKE ART HAPPEN training programme. Chris describes the benefits of participation in this process as:

- developing the confidence to set something up from start to finish.

- "The headspace to think about what I want to do"*.

- The nature of the cohort, which immediately created a whole new local artistic network.

For the live element of the MAKE ART HAPPEN programme, Christopher is collaborating on the delivery of a project around housing. Groups will be invited to talk about what makes a home – drawing and map-making, cyanotypes/blueprints of own dream house; ceramics and paper porcelain models will be developed and exhibited as an installation in Gateshead City Centre, in an unused shop, lit up from inside. This is, he says, *"the first time I have been able to steer my own course in my work"*

In time Christopher plans to expand the project working with people who had experienced homelessness, refugees, housing crisis, reflecting on lack of choice, and the experience of being forced into an inflexible system. He has secured additional £500 via Neighbourhood improvement fund and is currently applying for Arts Council funding.

He also now sees operating as a creative community "agent" as an element of his practice. In this mode he is developing a festival project that will support community centres in the Big Local Gateshead area to expand what they do and link to each other more effectively; and helping to promote the STAR people programme, which is intended to stimulate more engagement and the opportunities to make good ideas happen. In terms of continuing to develop, Chris is considering undertaking an MA in Sociology alongside a dedicated participatory arts practice.

6. Make Art Happens effectively delivers outcomes for strategic initiatives

6.1 Arts and Neighbourhood Development

Art and creativity is increasingly used within local strategies concerning regeneration, health and well-being and place making with cross-sector commissioners acknowledging the contribution of arts participation to the restoration of 'social bonds' (Ranciere, 2006;57)¹. Artists and arts organisations often act as intermediaries for communities and individuals who are experiencing uncertainty, grappling with new systems of local governance or policy initiatives and demographic change within their neighbourhoods. Participatory arts can offer the potential for communities to communicate their needs, reflect and respond to situations affecting their lives and to make active contributions to their locality.

Make Art Happen has been commissioned by a number of strategic initiatives across the North East, each having defined programmes of work with differing desired outcomes, but all recognising the potential of the programme to make a contribution to delivering their strategy.

6.2 Make Art Happen and Strategy Alignment

6.2.1 The Cultural Spring

The Cultural Spring is a Creative Places and People (CPP) project funded by Arts Council England. CPP aims to build new arts audiences and to increase participation in the areas of England which demonstrated the lowest audience and participation figures in the Active People Survey (2010). CPP programmes are encouraged to develop a local response to increasing participation and The Cultural Spring team recognised some synergies between the aims of Make Art Happen and their ambitions in Sunderland. All CPP programmes are encouraged to develop community commissioning models that aim to embed arts commissioning skills in communities, thus developing legacy for the programme. The Cultural Spring had already designed a successful and well-attended programme of art-making workshops, and was interested in how Make Art Happen might expand this current offer through their community champions network of volunteers. The commissioners were keen to boost confidence and decision-making skills, hoping to make a progression in the manner in which artists are chosen or commissioned. Their hopes for Make Art Happen were to develop independent thinking and widen frames of reference in order for autonomous commissioning to begin to happen. The Cultural Spring felt that the skills offered by Helix Arts were not significantly different to those held by their staff, but they believed that Make Art Happen offered a unique approach in transferring those skills. Their own team did not have the capacity or time to turn their expertise into a community training programme that could make their collective knowledge accessible.

The impact of the programme was perhaps more distributed than had been imagined, as some of the participants were not drawn from the immediate localities that form the target audience: thus the acceleration and intensification of local networks was less apparent. Geography and

¹ Ranciere, J. *The Politics of Aesthetics*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006

demographics of the area was a factor in this (a similar issue has been in play with the cohort at Peregrini Lindisfarne, another rural area with a low concentration of population). The programme was successful in developing the relationship of Grace House, A Sunderland charity that provides care to children from all over the North East with complex disabilities, health needs and life limiting illnesses. Grace House hosted the live project activity, putting creativity into a highly visible space. Since the project took place the organisation has become perceived as one that utilises the arts in its work, with artists now approaching the hospice with self-funded project opportunities. Grace House has commissioned an artist to work with them on developing a space within their grounds, and become part of the Sunderland City of Culture bidding team. This staff member has since left for a new voluntary sector role out of the region, though still in the North, taking with her well-honed critical and practical skills to be applied to a new work context.

Another local volunteer (trainee) experienced Make Art Happen energised? learning-through-doing and has developed both the skills and the confidence to propose and instigate new projects in her local community, programmes that take a different approach and sit at some critical distance to activities currently offered. Her volunteering for The Cultural Spring continues.

The Cultural Spring commissioners felt that the MAKE ART HAPPEN current model was expensive when compared to other training products in the sector. They would consider commissioning a second Make Art Happen course as a component of their programme but would want to explore ways in which more people could benefit or in which learning could be spread more widely, potentially through digital resources and remote learning, in order to achieve value for money.

6.2.2 Gateshead Cultural Strategy

The Gateshead Cultural Strategy, led by Gateshead Strategic Partnership has ambitions to develop a network of creative and community hubs, a thriving community and voluntary sector, and other aims and objectives concerning talent creation/retention and increasing the visitor economy. The Borough has a further overarching aim to develop stronger cross-organisational partnerships. In the strategy, culture is defined as encompassing: arts, artists, architecture, community centres, college, concert halls, creative industries, design, galleries, heritage, leisure centres, libraries, museums, musicians, open spaces, parks, people, places of worship, public art, schools, sports clubs, sporting events and venues, theatres, universities, voluntary sector and volunteers.

Karolynne Hart, Gateshead Arts Development Manager, was contacted by Helix Arts concerning a possible Make Art Happen pilot project. Helix Arts had felt that the potential of the programme to upskill communities in Gateshead had synergy with ambitions set out within in the Gateshead Cultural Strategy. Whilst a ready-to-go community group for whom this was a natural fit was not immediately apparent, Karolynne could see that the Make Art Happen approach had potential to excite artists about initiating their own projects, instead of confining their practice to responding to available briefs, which were increasingly rare, and sometimes limiting in their scope. With a brief to develop artist's practice in the area, she was keen to support new and emerging artists who wanted to develop participatory skills and therefore Gateshead committed £4000 matched funding to the programme.

The approach of delivering the programme directly to artists rather than the development of intermediaries in local communities, could be seen to turn the ethos and ambition of Make Art Happen on its head. However, many of the skills developed through the Make Art Happen course and practical project are exactly the skills new and emerging artists who want to work in socially engaged situations lack. Through the delivery of the course it became apparent how limited or inconsistent artists understanding of key processes – such as fundraising and evaluation – actually were in practice. Karolynne describes how she “*made a lot of assumptions that artists would just know*” – but certain elements are maybe just not as obvious for practitioners”.

At the time of writing this report, the Make Art Happen course supported by Gateshead Arts Development is still in process. Initial observations from the commissioner indicate that the trainees have been made aware of each other’s practice and begun to develop multi-disciplinary work. The micro-teach element, in which artists demonstrated a very short example of participatory processes in which they were skilled, offered huge value to this version of MAKE ART HAPPEN and an effective way to try out different practices and understand ways in which other artists work with groups. Karolynne felt that the networking element of the project was particularly strong. The project will enable the 8 artists supported via MAKE ART HAPPEN to build and maintain stronger connections with third sector organisations. It is hoped that the next 12 months will see them being active in setting up new projects with the skills and confidence to negotiate for appropriate recognition and payment for their work.

6.2.3 Leisureworks

Leisureworks is a charitable trust that delivers a range of services and managing leisure and cultural facilities across Derwentside. They manage a portfolio of Arts in the Community projects, with a focus on wellbeing, including an established social prescribing scheme, for which ongoing funding/commissioning remains an issue, despite proven outcomes. Make Art Happen seemed ideal as a possible extension activity for this social prescribing programme, or indeed potentially something that might form part of a long-term sustainability strategy for it.

Initial consultation suggested a good level of interest by the existing group in delivering this or a similar programme independently and obtaining independent external funding. At the “Meet the Trainer” event, however, it became clear that some volunteers were more interested in participation rather than organising and felt that taking responsibility for managing the project might prove too challenging. The programme went ahead with a small cohort of 5 trainees, with Leisureworks offering support to the group to deliver the project through a paid freelance worker.

Despite some difficulties with the form and intensity of the course the trainees stayed with the programme and very much enjoyed the project once it “became real” in the live project phase. Leisureworks felt that without the mentoring support, the group might have faltered, but with it, the group worked well together. Leisureworks are confident that a future course could be tailored to fit a similar target group successfully and would be willing to partner on a subsequent programme.

The commissioned artist was Kathryn Thompson, a previous Make Art Happen trainee who delivered a successful enjoyable project, and the completed artwork was donated to the local hospice. The cohort felt that the project had ongoing benefit, was of interest to that community, and had developed a sense of pride, achievement and contribution for participants and trainees. The Colour Your Life group developed a new relationship with another organisation through working with Helix Arts and Make Art Happen which was considered to be a particularly positive outcome. Commissioner Martin Weston felt that the project involved a good Health & Well being partnership; developed positive public relations and strong local messaging. His main development need was that Helix Arts should have made an adjustment to the training programme in order to fully support trainees who have high support needs. Do we state something here about less experienced MAKE ART HAPPEN trainer? Whilst recognising the quality of the training and the intrinsic values of an arts management course, he felt Make Art Hapen was expensive in comparison to other project management and fundraising courses, many of which are offered free of charge within the voluntary sector. He felt that only a well-resourced organisation would be able to afford the programme and that an entirely voluntary group would struggle with its time and resource demands, content and the cost.

6.3.4 Gateshead Capacity Building Fund

David Andrew is a senior officer within Gateshead Council, with an area co-ordination role, and working both at strategic service and community level. Gateshead Council's integrated approach to health and wellbeing focuses on the growth and development of the community and third sector, aiming for it to become fitter stronger more sustainable in an asset-based community development model. Aware of this alignment with Make Art Happen's aims, Helix Arts had approached Gateshead Council. David's remit involves designing ways to bring people together to "get things to happen in communities" and to enable "people to think differently about themselves and their neighbours". He wanted to explore approaches that would invoke curiosity and believed that managing an arts project would be the ideal hook – a different offer with the opportunity to "get hands dirty" that would attract new people, with different capacities to get involved: those who wanted a different engagement to 'coffee morning' type activities.

Make Art Happen was supported via bid the local Capacity Building Fund, which has a rigorous and competitive process. Projects supported by the fund need to meet the strategic objectives of Live Love Gateshead which involves developing a sense of pride and ownership by all; and those of Live Well Gateshead, developing a healthy, inclusive and nurturing place for all. Potential projects against fund criteria with decisions being made at a policy and strategic level. Projects can encompass but are not exclusive to:

- Developing and mobilising volunteers
- Supporting and building relationships within communities
- Supporting residents to build their communities and improve what is already there
- Increased capability, capacity and sustainability in the voluntary and community sector
- Maximising the opportunities of funding - including exploration of different funding models

The fund supported two Make Art Happen cohorts in Gateshead: Bensham and Teams, which was delivered in partnership with Live Well Gateshead; and Birtley and Kibblesworth whose trainees delivered a project with Birtley Villas, a sheltered housing scheme.

At first Helix Arts struggled to find people who wanted to be involved in the Gateshead Make Art Happen cohorts but by using a new open call type approach, two hubs of participants were identified. Two very successful projects took place with both cohorts completing the full training programme and all seeing the benefits of their work directly impacting on the local community. Both groups found beneficiaries who were clearly in need of intervention and carried out significant consultation in order to develop the best artistic response. In terms of meeting the outcomes of the capacity fund, Make Art Happen successfully mobilised two groups of volunteers, the majority of whom were unknown to each other at the outset. Both groups developed new relationships with communities, Birtley and Kibblesworth carrying out an embedded programme of work in a sheltered housing scheme with ongoing impact; and Bensham and Teams founding a new independent arts organisation to continue their work, whilst also completing some small scale fundraising. Overall the commissioner felt that the project had delivered *“Exactly the legacy intended....It was there something you’d really hoped would happen”*. The projects catalysed two groups of people and tapped their assets and skills. He felt that the programme offered significant value for money and that its potential to impact across many key indicators (health and wellbeing) should be modelled, in order to develop roll out.

Feedback from commissioners has been very strong and positive although there were acknowledged difficulties in some contexts. Overall, the outcome of involvement with Make Art Happen has been to assist in progressing strategic objectives.

One commissioner felt that *“This type of approach has potential to be a commissionable product, within a range of settings – take the principles and tailor it into a really robust next stage scalable pilot”*.

As more and more local authorities move from delivery to enabling models, Make Art Happen is an ideal product for those engaged in asset-based community development approaches.

In shaping future programmes, commissioners recommend that Helix Arts consider:

- Ways to make Make Art Happen a more cost-effective model, in a climate where value for money tends to be quantitatively measured.
- Ways in which legacy could be a component within the course content
- Shaping and pitching the course in relation to the strategic needs assessment of local boroughs.
- Ways in which the employability elements of the programme and enable these to be evidenced

6.4 Other Learning

Over and above the three key themes, most importantly the training course develops a number of transferable skills in project management, team building, budgeting, and evaluation. All of these skills are applicable in a range of differing job opportunities and sectors. Although there is an emphasis on arts programmes, trainees all cited skill development in at least three hard skill areas, thus building a much needed skill base for community organisations.

Make Art Happen can also be considered a new tool or product which enables local people to organise themselves around addressing local issues and for assisting the development of local solutions. The project improves frames of reference at neighbourhood level concerning control of issues, finding solutions and applying the arts in a useful and purposeful manner. Using the arts instrumentally in this manner can also build new audiences and new participants in areas of low engagement.

Examples of the local issues that participants felt enabled to address include:

- Offering communities something to do, widening access to ideas and participation and meeting new people. Creating new connection points for communities, especially in disadvantaged neighbourhoods where facilities and amenities are facing underfunding.

“This seems like a small thing – but is an increasingly pressing need - many communities lack the infrastructure to provide meeting points, opportunities to connect, to be active”.

- Brightening up and improving visual aspects of environment, even temporarily. In response to one project, local people said that “they were proud to live in a community that produces and thinks of things like that”, that they felt better about where they lived. They felt Make Art Happen projects could “enrich the community, not just decorate it”. They hoped to alter perceptions and that people from outside the area could see the evidence of it being an active, caring community.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Evaluation Questions

- Is Make Art Happen enabling organisations to develop/fundraise for and manage participatory arts programmes?
- Is Make Art Happen enabling individual participants to develop/fundraise for and manage participatory arts ?
- Is Make Art Happen an effective business model for Helix in terms of reaching its strategic aims?

7.2 Participatory Arts Development and Fundraising at an Organisational Level.

Helix Arts has worked with wide number of organisations across this evaluation period. All of which have benefitted from increased capacity in terms of the skills, abilities and knowledge base of volunteers and staff. Organisations benefitting from the project include hosts, commissioners and the places where live projects took place. Organisations have witnessed and made use of a growth in competence to conceptualise, manage and evaluate participatory arts projects in their staff, volunteers and community members. The project has been successful in developing new networks of volunteers with shared interests. Make Art Happen provides a much needed platform or function for galvanising existing interest in participatory arts and could be described as a producer and an enabler of 'bridging capital'. This form of social capital allows individuals and groups to come together to share and exchange information and to form ideas. The investment of time in developing knowledge and understanding within the Make Art Happen model has helped to build consensus in the formation of plans and in local organising. The network formed in Gateshead through a series of targeted Make Art Happen projects demonstrates the ability of the project to build a critical mass of understanding and interest (bridging capital) in deploying participatory arts to meet the needs of specific interest groups.

In areas such as Gateshead, Make Art Happen has developed potential for dialogue across strategic needs commissioning groups such as Live Well Gateshead through which it can be seriously considered that an arts based model can address community issues. As a result of Make Art Happen there is now a cross-fertilisation of ideas and the potential generation of more and improved quality of participatory arts activity which is commissioned and owned at a neighbourhood level. This is demonstrated through the Gateshead Bensham and Teams programme cohort who have established a small independent voluntary arts organisation have successfully pitched for another project from Helix Arts and are managing currently small scale programmes in their area. This project is positioned to take advantage of triple pronged support from Make Art Happen, Gateshead Council and Big Local.

We can attribute this success to Helix Arts and their delivery methodology which:

- Drew attention to areas of community need where shared thinking between different departments would assist in delivering outcomes.
- Provided stimulus for future joint working and collaborative approaches
- Demonstrated how and where high quality participatory arts-based approaches can deliver outcomes needed by local authorities specifically around community-building , wellbeing and participation.
- Demonstrated that small-scale, community -led and -delivered activity (professionally guided and supported) can address pressing issues for local authorities, including active ageing, mental health & wellbeing

7.4 Participatory Arts Development and Funding at an Individual Level

The most prominent success of the Make Art Happen project is the development of individuals. Throughout the evaluation process, there have been progressive impacts on trainees who have completed the Make Art Happen programme. The training course, although considered by some s to be in depth, provided a thorough grounding in participatory arts development and management. Most importantly the course provided opportunities for trainees to develop research and analysis skills concerning the needs and wants of community focussed organisations and their end users. This is a crucial skill for enabling meaningful and impactful arts programmes. The trainees who achieved this task developed a deeper understanding of their communities and neighbourhoods, and how to collectively address need. Trainees predominantly cited the most impactful element of the project to be the live arts delivery. However, the live project and artist commission was based on their understanding of what would work well in their chosen location and user group. This is evidenced in the quality of artists briefs, proposals and live projects. The training model developed a through a consistently applied process through which trainee cohorts produced projects that demonstrated appropriate ideas for their settings and were successful in meeting local needs.

It must also be highlighted in this evaluation that although the Make Art Happen is not focussed on artist development, the process provided an excellent creative offer for artists. Effie Burns work in Birtley, MIND's mindful journaling project with Susan Warlock, and Darlington's PLAY proposal are just some examples of Make Art Happen's capacity to increase the quality of opportunity for artists and a platform to respond to develop contexts and briefs.

Make Art Happen has enabled a stealthy accumulation of skills, talent and understanding and this is demonstrated in number of Make Art Happen 'graduates' who express their growth in personal and professional development. There is evidence that trainees have continued to become become initiators of participatory arts projects and/or had increased involvement in arts and cultural activity. The programme has also created the impetus for some trainees to redefine themselves as self-employed artists. Former Make Art Happen trainees Kathryn Thompson and Chris Folwell who participated in the early Make Art Happen cohorts are furthest along this trajectory. Both have secured employment and investment, and initiated and delivered activity. At the point of summarising this evaluation, there are also individuals from the Creative Darlington, Gateshead

Artists and Peregrini Lindisfarne programmes who have described clear, ambitious, but realistic plans that they intend to action in the next few months.

7.4 Make Art Happen as a business model

This study was initially tasked with viewing Make Art Happen as a potential business model. However, since commissioning this evaluation the project has developed considerably from its initial aims and ambitions. In planning this evaluation, it was conceived that Make Art Happen could in the future be bought as an off the shelf product which could be easily delivered for a fee or as a commission. The longitudinal developmental approach taken by Helix Arts has now produced a programme of support for communities and organisations which is structured but also flexible. This involves capital investment and as yet the evaluation team has not seen a costing model which would bring profit. However, that is not to say that the project is not fundable or saleable.

It may be more appropriate to view Make Art Happen as a component of Helix Arts' core business case to key funders. The main argument concerning a business model is proven impacts and outcomes for people, places, communities and the arts. In considering Make Art Happen as an offer, Helix Arts could make a case for support concerning pathways to impact. Through this evaluation's case study approach, Helix Arts could structure a series of developmental plans for the project which offer outputs and outcomes for differing strategic needs. For future success and maximum financial feasibility, brokering requires a more and better strategic approach. To achieve this, the programme's marketing requires tight pitch that models impact across priority indicators such as health and wellbeing. With evidence of impact Make Art Happen is a good model for delivering leadership and knowledge transfer within the sector. A co-financed model could help to seed and nurture the right conditions for participatory arts continued development in the region and nationally.

A way ahead could involve the tactical clustering of Make Art Happen programmes across sectors within a locality. In considering where and how to invest time in new programme development, Helix could analyse existing contacts and relationships within a borough or location; and where several partners, either across different sectors, or multiple contacts within a single authority, could be engaged as collaborators. These potential partners should be brought together at an early stage for a conversation, (perhaps with presentations led by previous cohort members) about the project with the purpose of building a cluster or consortium approach.

7.5 Make Art Happen Going Forward

7.5.1 Leadership

Make Art Happen has planted seeds for the growth of participatory arts programming within communities across the North East but there remains a clear role and a requirement for Helix Arts continued leadership, challenge and nurture, in order for impacts to be consolidated over time.

This evaluation has uncovered a more developed understanding of the potential of participatory arts which has been activated through the programme. Commissioners and former hosts are motivated to continue to support further programmes where they have observed the project's impacts in their immediate context.

We have also identified that there is ongoing need and benefits for partner communities to have a continued relationship with Helix Arts. In fact, it would be tactical advantage to cement these relationships in order to develop participatory arts programmes of ambition and quality. For emerging practitioners and for smaller organisations without track record in the arts, having participated in Make Art Happen and the association with Helix Arts acts as a "badge" of quality assurance, supporting the ability to attract artists, commissions, funding and partnerships.

In summary, Helix Arts should consider the development of a leadership and support package for Make Art Happen partners and beneficiaries which continues to grow and develop talent, impacts, participants and audiences.

7.5.2 Modification of the product: Compact; Digital

The Make Art Happen course has been modified and developed over time in order to respond to early trainee feedback and to be suitable to meet the needs of different cohorts, the product concept remains broadly the same in terms of content and format. Feedback from hosts indicate that for some the product is too expensive and offers low value for money in terms of some of the generic content. Some investors, hosts and participants have found the course too intensive and demanding. Helix Arts should therefore consider and evaluate other delivery models for Make Art Happen that include a shorter course format with content selected from a menu of modules and possibly offer an online based course in order to offer user-defined access to resources for a larger number of people.

Skill-share models could also be encouraged and ways of cascading knowledge should be explored. In particular, peer delivery and twinning up of communities with Make Art Happen graduates where there is common ground. We recommend, however, that the full course Make Art Happen model continue to be offered and implemented alongside these options. The live project appears to be a transformative element and the point in the Make Art Happen programme at which learning is applied, consolidated and becomes also becomes tangible. This element is essential should be retained, though potentially in different scales and forms.

7.5.4 Make Art Happening and Volunteering

Helix Arts have also proven that Make Art Happen and indeed the arts in general can be a successful vehicle for building volunteering programmes and for developing transferable skills. Looking closely at the demographics of volunteers and continuing to follow their progress after this programme ends could demonstrate a business case attractive to funders who wish to develop voluntary capacity, such as Big Lottery. Helix Arts could support this to happen through partner led but Helix Arts supported applications to funds which support community development and skill building. For an example, an application to Awards for All could act as a pilot study to build skills in people and stronger communities through the Make Art Happen model. A successful pilot could bring investment from Big Lottery Reaching Communities, which could also be evidenced through this evaluation.

7.5.5 Arts and Artist Development

Make Art Happen can also be viewed as an audience development model which has engaged people from some of the most deprived areas in the North East as both passive and active participants. Where trainees are most motivated, audiences and participants continue to take part in the arts without strategic input or support from arts funding. Art happens here as a component of community development and we have seen that high quality programming can be developed through a knowledge transfer model.

Make Art Happen has developed a community of practitioners and with some support and careful nurturing this network could build into something more robust and collaborative. Many of the artists interviewed through the evaluation process whether as trainees, or commissioned artists, felt their participatory art-making can be a lonely practice, with few peer collaborators or critical friends to support them in their development. Make Art Happen has connected people and Helix Arts could ensure that this professional support network is galvanised and has more opportunities to grow and develop.

In considering arts development and artistic outcomes of the project Arts Council England could be a potential investor in the development and sustainability of the project. The outcomes of this evaluation map to the following Arts Council England's goals:

Goal 1. Excellence in practice: Make Art Happen could be significant in shaping the expectation that participatory arts will be delivered by practitioners with sufficient skill and expertise in socially engaged practice.

Goal 2 – Great Art for Everybody: Make Art Happen has the potential to reach and to offer a sustained arts delivery to locations, contexts and communities in where many arts organisations struggle to engage audiences. Make Art Happen's live projects which have been designed by trainees have demonstrated the model can provide appropriate, engaging and sensitive opportunities for people considered hard-to-reach. Make Art Happen offers a credible, grass-roots led alternative to this traditional outreach or project based delivery.

Goal 4 - Diversity and skills. Make Art Happen has the potential to deliver strongly against this goal by providing entry points for careers in the arts for people from diverse backgrounds, through its deep reach and relationship building in communities and areas where this is an unconventional path

7.5.5 Strategic Commissioning

As part of the evaluation process all trainees and partners were asked “Who else should participate in Make Art Happen?”. This question was designed to bring forth new ideas based on the individual experiences of those involved in the project. The evaluation team hoped to identify new areas or contexts where the project could have impact. Most of the trainees responded with “everyone” and all those interviewed provided a resounding endorsement of the quality of experience and personal development. Strategic commissioning partners, especially those who felt that they had achieved their initial goals through Make Art Happen appraised the programme through a more critical lens. Those interviewed offered a number of pathways which could see Make Art Happen making an impact and where the projects assists them to meet their goals and priorities.

- **Young People**

Existing structured programmes of work with young people that might include voluntary sector organisations; school based programmes, youth enterprise models such as Princes Trust; and Arts Award. The project also has the potential to meld arts and cultural funds such as Youth Music and Young Roots.

- **Older People**

A Make Art Happen aligning with active aging strategies could achieve multiple outcomes in enabling the involvement of more active older people with the arts and in their community. This approach would assist in developing a potential resource of older people as volunteers and in developing networks of personal support in areas where people experience social isolation. Whilst this might be led or hosted by a voluntary organisation, we would recommend it is designed and delivered through a partnership with a strategic authority where possible in order to maximise benefits and impacts. Arts Council England’s and The Baring Foundation’s joint fund Celebrating Age offers a good fit between the funds aims and Make Art Happen’s ability to enable participants to generate programmes that meet their own needs.

- **Health and Wellbeing**

Make Art Happen has shown to have significant and positive impacts at an individual level for supporting participants mental health and providing a subtle early intervention strategy. Two programmes – South Tyneside Mind and Leisureworks were specifically been generated in a mental health context. MIND’s staff and volunteer led programme developed a project aimed at people who have identified as experiencing mental health difficulties, achieving good outcomes and feedback. Leisureworks cohort highlighted the issues and complexities concerning working in this context and thus provided learning about how to adapt and improve Make Art Happen in a wellbeing model. There is an opportunity for Helix to position itself as an enabling agent in relation to community mental health. As commissioners (eg Public Health departments) look for different ways to deliver against growing need future Make Art Happen programmes could focus on capturing, documenting

and articulating health and wellbeing outcomes for trainees, participants and communities. Strong evidence and individual stories are influential in engaging commissioners with little or no arts experience. The evaluation team also highlights the need to focus draw in wider knowledge and opinion of deploying Make Art Happen in a mental health setting. An expert peer group or Delphi Panel process could use the two models as examples, and bring in additional expertise to shape and refine how best to generate this as a specific offer. This might be a context in which non arts charitable or lottery funding might be achievable to seed fund specific programmes whilst sufficient evidence of impact is gathered to convince health commissioners (NHS, CCGs, Public Health) to invest.