

***ARTWORKS CYMRU***

***EVALUATION REPORT***

***APRIL 2014***

***Annabel Jackson Associates Ltd***

***The Priory***

***54 Lyncombe Hill***

***Bath BA2 4PJ***

***Somerset***

***Tel: 441225-446614***

***Email: [ajataja@aol.com](mailto:ajataja@aol.com)***

***Website: [www.AnnabelJacksonAssociates.com](http://www.AnnabelJacksonAssociates.com)***

## **CONTENTS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

***The programme***

***The partnership***

***Activities***

### **CONCEPTUALISATION**

***Introduction***

***Explanation of logic models***

***Language***

***Logic model***

***Initial definitions***

***Key questions***

***Linking conceptualisation to practice***

### **CONSULTATION**

***Introduction***

***Key points***

***Evaluation***

### **BLOOMING VOICES: WNO CASE STUDY**

***Introduction***

***Background***

***Conception***

***Planning***

***Delivery***

***Creating quality***

***Conclusions***

### **MADE BY HAND: HEAD FOR ARTS CASE STUDY**

***Introduction***

***Background***

***Conception***

***Planning***

## **ARTWORKS CYMRU PATHFINDER 2014**

***Delivery***

***Creating quality and ownership***

***Conclusions***

### **COMPANY 5: SHERMAN CYMRU CASE STUDY**

***Introduction***

***Background***

***Conception***

***Planning***

***Delivery***

***Creating quality***

***Conclusions***

### **CONCLUSIONS AND GAPS**

***The partnership***

***Learning***

***Gaps***

***Copyright © Annabel Jackson Associates Ltd. April 2014.***

***Not to be reproduced in part or whole without prior permission***

## **INTRODUCTION**

### ***The programme***

***ArtWorks: Developing Practice in Participatory Settings' is a Paul Hamlyn Foundation Special Initiative with support and funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Creativity Culture & Education (supported by Arts Council England) and the Cultural Leadership Programme.***

### ***The partnership***

***The ArtWorks Cymru Partnership brought together the following organisations:***

- ***Welsh National Opera***
- ***Community Music Wales***
- ***Head for Arts***
- ***National Dance Company Wales***
- ***Sherman Cymru***
- ***Streetwise Opera***
- ***Professor Hamish Fyfe.***

***The partners signed a memorandum of understanding and agreed a list of roles and responsibilities.***

### ***Activities***

***Between July 2011 and April 2014, the partnership:***

- ***Held 15 partnership meetings.***
- ***Carried out and reported consultation with training providers, artists, arts organisations and (to a limited extent) commissioners.***
- ***Ran five action learning projects.***

## **ARTWORKS CYMRU PATHFINDER 2014**

- *Ran dissemination events: an evening debate and a conference.*

## **CONCEPTUALISATION**

### **Introduction**

***Evaluation is composed of four interlinked strands:***

- ***Thinking. Framing, focusing, conceptualising, interpreting, synthesising***
- ***People. Motivating, training, involving, reassuring, listening, informing, influencing***
- ***Systems. Planning, gathering data, entering data on a computer, analysing data, disseminating information***
- ***Action. Making recommendations, implementing recommendation.***

***Omitting the thinking stage is the most common weakness in evaluations in England and this oversight can severely reduce the usefulness of the resulting work.***

***Evaluative thinking has these benefits:***

- ***Creating a focused evaluation system. Evaluation methods should be focused on outcomes identified from the logic model and on critical success factors inferred by assumptions.***
- ***Bringing the different elements of the evaluation system together. The logic model identifies key questions for the organisation that lie at the heart of different programmes. The key questions should relate to strategic objectives and core competencies of the organisation.***
- ***Ensuring a clear direction. The process of writing a logic model can help to create a group consensus about the precise intended outcomes.***
- ***Customising the evaluation. The logic model helps ensure that the evaluation captures what is special about the organisation.***
- ***Testing the logic behind the project. The logic model session helps check that the ideas behind the project are sound and can identify potential hurdles in its delivery.***

*Clear thinking strengthens not just the evaluation but also the implementation of a programme.*

- *Ensuring expectations are realistic. The logic model shows the chain of logic and therefore graphically illustrates the time lag between short term outcomes, long term outcomes and impact.*
- *Summarising the project or programme. The logic model gives a concise description of the project in a form that shows its rationale.*
- *Providing a structure to capture organisational learning. Comparing what happens with what was expected or planned can lead to questions about organisational lessons.*

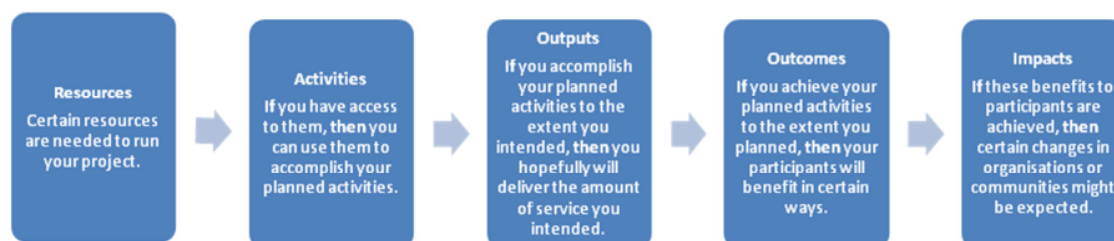
#### ***Explanation of logic models***

*The two most common forms of visualisation for conceptualisation are logic models and systems diagrams. We use the first here because it is simpler. A logic model is a visual depiction of a programme or project. Logic models were originally developed and popularised by The Kellogg Foundation in the United States. By plotting the different stages in a programme, the actions and assumed consequences (outcomes), logic models provide a simple way to summarise programmes by including their description but also their rationale and philosophy.*

*Logic models are read from left to right:*

***Your planned work***

***Your intended results***



***Language***

***This is our definition of the terms used in a logic model:***

- ***Resources are financial and non-financial inputs for a project or programme.***
- ***Activities are the actions taken by the project or programme.***
- ***Outputs are measures of effort to show that the project or programme took place and can be defined from the supply side (number of events), or the demand side (number of participants).***
- ***Outcomes are changes in the behaviour, skills, knowledge, motivation, feelings, attitudes, or aspirations of participants; or the culture, structures, systems, or processes of organisations.***
- ***Impacts are the direct and indirect effects for society, the economy and the environment.***

***Logic model***

***This is the logic model developed in the first partnership meeting:***

# **ARTWORKS CYMRU PATHFINDER 2014**

| <b>ACTIVITIES</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>OUTPUTS</b>                                                                                                                 | <b>SHORTER<br/>TERM<br/>OUTCOMES</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>LONGER<br/>TERM<br/>OUTCOMES</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>IMPACT</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Training audit</b><br><br><b>Consultation with<br/>75+ artists in 5<br/>consultation days</b><br><br><b>Consultation with<br/>participants</b><br><br><b>Consultation with<br/>arts organisations</b><br><br><b>5 case<br/>studies/research<br/>projects</b> | <b>Quality control<br/>framework</b><br><br><b>Practice and<br/>business<br/>models</b><br><br><b>Accreditation<br/>system</b> | <b>Learning<br/>across and<br/>beyond<br/>pathfinders<br/>about what<br/>constitutes<br/>quality in<br/>participative<br/>work: cross<br/>artform, for<br/>different groups<br/>of people and<br/>artists at<br/>different stages<br/>in their<br/>development<br/>and with<br/>different<br/>motivations<br/>(passion or<br/>economic<br/>imperative)</b> | <b>Artists at all<br/>stages of their<br/>development<br/>have better<br/>access to better<br/>professional<br/>development<br/>opportunities,<br/>are better<br/>networked,<br/>have more<br/>confidence in<br/>their skills, are<br/>more articulate<br/>in their work,<br/>have a greater<br/>sense that<br/>value is placed<br/>on their work,<br/>develop their<br/>creative<br/>practice<br/>through<br/>participative<br/>work</b><br><br><b>Participants<br/>have a higher</b> | <b>Participative<br/>work makes a<br/>step change in<br/>confidence,<br/>recognition<br/>and ambition:<br/>a major<br/>strategic and<br/>cultural shift in<br/>the way work<br/>is perceived<br/>and the quality<br/>of the practice<br/>(and more<br/>sustainable)</b> |

|  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
|--|--|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  |  |  | <p><i>quality of experience</i></p> <p><i>Training is strategic: joined up across funders, deliverers etc. and networked across Wales</i></p> <p><i>Employers are more discerning about quality in participative arts</i></p> |  |
|--|--|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

**ASSUMPTIONS:**

*Participative art does not have the recognition and status it requires.*

*The quality of experience for participants is variable and personal.*

*Artists are not adequately trained for the work: they need more cohesive training and development – and opportunities to deepen their practice - if they are to engage confidently in the work.*

*Employers need assurances that they are getting quality artistic interventions. EXPAND*

*The needs of artists and participants lie at the heart of the programme.*

*Initial training and formal and informal CPD should be integrated to give a holistic set of solutions to the gaps and needs.*

*There is little development work for working with older people, it is mainly on young*

people.

*The policy context is becoming increasingly wanting arts to be participative.*

*Artists are open to new learning, and have the time/skills for reflection.*

*The partnership can have an overall impact on the wider infrastructure in Wales.*

*The essence of the programme/quality is to know what questions to ask.*

### **Initial definitions**

*The partnership discussed these elements of quality in participative practice:*

- *Transformation. It is important that definitions capture the subjective, personal, unexpected and lagged elements of transformation. Transformation might occur in the participant or in other people's views of expectations of the participant. Transformation for one person might seem ordinary for another.*
- *Value for money. The definition needs to capture investment in time as well as money.*
- *Fitness for Purpose. Stakeholders might have different definitions. It is important that definitions capture the emerging expectations as projects gain understanding of what is possible. Fitness for purpose does not exclude failing: flaw can make a process special.*
- *Magic. It is important that definitions are not too formulaic. Sometimes artists break all the rules and still create magic.*
- *Achievement. It is important to have an objective element. Hard work could be seen as boring but might still be vital for achievement.*

*The initial definition the group came up with was:*

*Context + Potential + Time ÷ Expectations = Magic + transformations*

### **Key questions**

*How does quality differ between different contexts?*

***What are the different aspects of context?***

- ***Different target groups (e.g. children, young people, older people, BME groups and others).***
- ***Different lengths and types of engagement.***
- ***Different tasks in participative practice.***

***What is quality in each of these tasks?***

- ***Communicating the benefits of participative works, what the client will get for their money***
- ***Framing the project***
- ***Engaging the participants***
- ***What is their role***
- ***Clarifying expectations of artists/commissioners/funders and how flexible those expectations (who needs who most)***
- ***And know what to do when people don't attend***
- ***Choosing the artist/choosing the client***
- ***Ensuring a non-hierarchical relationship with participants***
- ***Ensuring a high quality of product***
- ***Making a link between your group and the wider community***
- ***Link to the artists own creative practice***
- ***Capturing learning***
- ***Communicating learn***
- ***Networking with other artists.***

## **ARTWORKS CYMRU PATHFINDER 2014**

*Putting these aspects together and using the structure of the Modelling of Excellence framework from NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) produced this overall set of questions:*

| <b>HEADING</b>                      | <b>POSSIBLE QUESTIONS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Commissioning</i></b>         | <b><i>How do you communicate what the commissioner will get for their money?</i></b><br><br><b><i>What are the lessons about working with commissioners?</i></b><br><br><b><i>What preparations or conditions support quality in participative work?</i></b> |
| <b><i>Engaging participants</i></b> | <b><i>How do you build a rapport with participants?</i></b><br><br><b><i>How important is it to build a rapport with participants early on in the project or process?</i></b><br><br><b><i>How do you get the trust of participants?</i></b>                 |
| <b><i>Setting the direction</i></b> | <b><i>Do you clarify expectations early on in the work?</i></b><br><br><b><i>How?</i></b><br><br><b><i>What skills do you look for in participants?</i></b><br><br><b><i>How do you find what skills they have?</i></b>                                      |
| <b><i>Maintaining interest</i></b>  | <b><i>How do you change the emotional state of a participant who is not wanting</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                      |

|                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                   | <p><i>to take part?</i></p> <p><i>Are some emotional reactions more difficult to deal with than others? What? Why?</i></p> <p><i>How do you work with mixed ability groups?</i></p> <p><i>What do you do when challenged?</i><br/><i>How can you turn the situation around?</i></p> <p><i>What do you do when the energy in the group goes down?</i></p> <p><i>Do you use humour?</i></p> <p><i>What role does intuition have?</i></p> <p><i>How important is it to make a link from the group to the wider community?</i></p> |
| <i>Assessing and responding</i>                   | <p><i>What sort of reaction are you looking for?</i></p> <p><i>What signs are you looking for that tell you that you need to alter your approach?</i></p> <p><i>What questions are you asking yourself as you go along, to check the work is progressing well?</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Ensuring a high quality process or product</i> | <p><i>What stages do you go through to ensure co-production of the work?</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

|                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                      | <p><i>What are you doing that creates quality in participative work? E.g. movements, facial expressions, verbalisations, voice tones</i></p> <p><i>How do you know you are producing high quality work?</i></p> <p><i>What do you see, hear or feel that lets you know there is quality in participative work?</i></p> <p><i>How do you influence participants to produce their best work?</i></p> <p><i>How does the final result reflect your artistic input?</i></p> <p><i>What is happening when artists break all the rules and still create magic?</i></p> |
| <i>Working with other artists</i>    | <p><i>How does your approach change when you are working with other artists?</i></p> <p><i>How does collaboration with other artists affect the quality of the participative work?</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Link to the artist's practice</i> | <p><i>Why do you choose to work in a participative context?</i></p> <p><i>How does it affect your creative practice?</i></p> <p><i>What beliefs do you have that support</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

|                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                               | <p><i>your ability to create quality in participative work?</i></p> <p><i>What is the background feeling that keeps you engaged to create quality in participative work?</i></p> <p><i>What aspects of your personality support your work in participative work? What aspects of your personality make participative work more difficult or need to be managed?</i></p> |
| <i>Impact on participants</i> | <p><i>What causes transformation?</i></p> <p><i>How much of the impact on participants is under your control?</i></p> <p><i>How can you maximise the impact on the participants?</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Learning</i>               | <p><i>How has your participative work changed over time?</i></p> <p><i>What lessons have you learnt?</i></p> <p><i>Do you share learning about participative work with other artists?</i></p> <p><i>Would you like a forum or route to share learning with other artists?</i></p>                                                                                       |
| <i>Contextuality</i>          | <p><i>What are the differences between art forms?</i></p> <p><i>What are the differences between</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p><i>Welsh and English practice?</i></p> <p><i>What are the differences for different ages or groups of people?</i></p> <p><i>How does quality vary for different lengths and types of engagement?</i></p> |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

*Key questions for each project were selected from this list.*

### *Linking conceptualisation to practice*

*One way to embed these conceptual elements is through codes of conduct. We collected codes of conduct statements from the partners and produced a synthesis.*

*Figure 1: Code of conduct for artists in participative settings*

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>INCLUDING</b></p> <p><i>Freelance artists must treat every participant with respect and consideration at all times. Freelance staff must ensure all participants are included in the sessions and no one is discriminated against on any grounds. Artists avoid being pigeonholed or pigeonholing participants and often challenge assumptions and stereotypes about who knows what.</i></p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <p><u><i>You should think about how your own attitudes, values and behaviour affect your work with participants.</i></u></p> <p><u><i>You should think about and attempt to address any barriers to participation.</i></u></p> | <p><b>REPRESENTING</b></p> <p><i>Freelance artists working for an arts organisation are part of the organisation and should reflect a positive image of the organisation.</i></p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <p><i>You should not criticise the arts organisation to participants or other partners.</i></p> <p><i>You should be approachable, friendly and professional at all times.</i></p> <p><i>You should not use any inappropriate language, lewd comments, slander, name calling, explicit or derogatory statements and should offer alternative suggestions e.g. during song writing/rap sessions.</i></p> <p><i>You should not use inappropriate visual</i></p> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p><i>materials such as written, photographic or computerised materials likely to cause offence.</i></p> <p><i>You should not use talk about aspects of the arts organisation which are confidential. This would apply to funding issues and anything that could be damaging to the organisation.</i></p> <p><i>You should arrive at least half an hour before the workshop begins.</i></p> <p><i>You should not take smoking breaks during the project. Any worker wishing to smoke in the designated break should do so out of the sight of the project participants.</i></p>                                                                        |
| <p><b>INSPIRING</b></p> <p><i>Freelance artists should communicate their passion for the arts, encourage self-discipline and creative thinking in participants, and encourage high standards. Quality applies to everything: the prior information, the organisation, the precision of construction, the calibre of materials, the relationships with partners, the sensitivity to context, attention to detail and overall fitness for purpose.</i></p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <p><i>You should use positive critical feedback and praise. You should praise real achievement and honest effort.</i></p> | <p><b>CARING</b></p> <p><i>Freelance artists have a duty to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from physical, emotional or sexual abuse. You should be aware of and act in accordance with partners' child protection and vulnerable adults policies, and health and safety policies.</i></p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <p><i>You should be aware of and comply with all aspects of health and safety.</i></p> <p><i>You should not offer any young person lifts in a personal vehicle.</i></p> <p><i>You should not be alone with a child unless it is unavoidable.</i></p> <p><i>You should report any bullying among the</i></p> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Unearned praise can appear patronising or insincere.</i></p> <p><i>You should adopt a position of non-judgemental objectivity and non-personalised behaviour.</i></p> <p><i>You should use activities that are challenging enough so that participants are not bored but not so difficult that they feel frustrated. The aim is for participants to be 'in the flow'.</i></p> | <p><i>participants to the project partner and arts organisation staff member.</i></p> <p><i>You should keep an accurate record of any accidents/incidents that take place during the participative project.</i></p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## **CONSULTATION**

### ***Introduction***

***Consultation was carried out in 2011 and 2012. Research was carried out by the ArtWorks Cymru researcher, Eleanor Sellers.***

### ***Key points***

***116 artists completed an online survey about their participative practice. Key points were:***

- ***54% of all respondents said they had no formal training in participative work. 23% had completed PGCEs or teaching certificates (which are not directly related to participatory practice) and 31% had undertaken training through university degree schemes or college courses.***
- ***99% of respondents said they were interested in professional development.***
- ***62% said they would be willing to pay for training.***
- ***19% of respondents had a strong preference for accreditation. 21% had a weak preference for accreditation. 48% of respondents had no preference for accreditation. 6% had a strong or weak preference against accreditation.***
- ***53% of respondents said that artists do not receive appropriate income for their participative work.***
- ***56% of respondents said that artists working in participative settings did not have suitable training available.***
- ***45% of respondents said they felt connected to a wider arts network. 48% of said they did not.***
- ***90% of respondents said that connection to a wider participatory arts network is important.***
- ***94% of respondents said they would like to join the ArtWorks Cymru network once established.***

## **ARTWORKS CYMRU PATHFINDER 2014**

*The Artworks Cymru team subsequently organised four consultations with artists: one in Galeri in Caernarfon, Catrin Finch Centre in Wrexham, one in Aberystwyth Art Centre, and two in the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff. 52 artists attended and key points were:*

- *Inspirational individuals have a profound effect on participatory artists.*
- *Many artists said they felt isolated, especially those working in North Wales.*
- *Artists welcomed opportunities to network and share learning, but thought that in practice competition for jobs hindered openness.*
- *Artists said they valued reflection but find it difficult to make the time to reflect.*
- *Artists were able to describe a wide range of skills and abilities that they bring to bear in their participative work. This included interpersonal skills, project management skills, and the ability to step back and let participants have ownership.*
- *Artists felt that more needed to be done to communicate the skills and resources required to give participants a high quality of experience.*
- *Artists felt that commissioners spoke a different language. They would appreciate help from organisations and umbrella bodies in interpreting the priorities of funders and commissioners.*

*Eleanor Sellers sent out a survey to more than 100 arts organisations involved in participative projects. Only 18 replied, and key points were:*

- *47% of respondents had more than 20 years' experience running participative projects.*
- *Only 12% of respondents said their projects were run bilingually, and none were reported as running entirely in Welsh.*
- *75% of respondents did not provide training for artists delivering participative work.*
- *82% of respondents felt that organisations should provide training for artists.*

## **ARTWORKS CYMRU PATHFINDER 2014**

- *Respondents expected artists to have a mix of technical and social skills, as well as attitudes and beliefs that support participative practice.*
- *90% of respondents said it is important to feel connected to the wider participatory arts sector and 70% said they already felt connected.*
- *10% of respondents stated a strong preference for accreditation. 30% stated a weak preference. 60% for unsure or had no preference for accreditation.*

*Eleanor Sellers approached 350 commissioning organisations about completing a survey about buying participative arts work. Only five organisations subsequently replied to the survey so results are not reported here.*

*Eleanor Sellers interviewed 27 participants about their experiences of arts projects. Key points were:*

- *Females are more likely to undertake participatory arts projects.*
- *Both young and old participants expect to learn new skills, or experience something new, during participatory arts activities.*
- *All participants expect participatory arts activities to be fun.*
- *For male participants under 25 years it is important that the activity is thought of as 'cool' by their peer group.*
- *Adult participants feel that it is important that projects are run by a well-known, or well respected, organisation.*
- *Participants frequently reported that they would like more participatory arts activities to take place in their local area, and are disappointed when projects end.*
- *Participants find it difficult to find out about participatory arts activities.*

### **Evaluation**

*Artists who attended the consultation workshops filled in a feedback form. We received 46 responses, a 89% response rate.*

## **ARTWORKS CYMRU PATHFINDER 2014**

### ***Key points were:***

- ***91% of respondents said that the workshop was well conceived.***
- ***91% of respondents said that the workshop was enjoyable.***
- ***89% of respondents said that the workshop was the right length.***
- ***85% of respondents said the workshop was important.***
- ***78% of respondents said that the objectives were clear.***
- ***96% of respondents felt that their views were respected in the workshop.***
- ***87% of respondents said that the workshop got at the key issues in the quality of participative work. The reticence was that some artists felt that they didn't know all the issues.***
- ***80% of respondents said that the workshop gave a deep rather than a stereotypical understanding of quality in participative work.***
- ***65% of respondents said that the workshop enriched their practice. Their reservations were that some thought the main benefit to their practice should be from action that would follow from the workshop rather than the discussion itself.***

### ***The gaps mentioned were:***

- ***Greater clarity on how views related to different art forms and participatory contexts.***
- ***More consideration of adults: discussion tended to focus on children and young people.***
- ***More on the social, political and financial context of artists' work today.***
- ***More time for artists to network with each other.***

## **BLOOMING VOICES: WNO CASE STUDY**

### **Introduction**

*The sources for this case study were:*

- *Planning documents.*
- *Project evaluation report (which included surveys of artists and participants).*
- *Transcripts of learning meetings with the artists (Stacey Blythe, Song Writer; Jenny Pearson, Vocal Animateur; Helen Latham, Supporting Animateur; Claire Evans, Illustrator).*
- *Interview with Claire Cressey (WNO producer).*

### **Background**

*WNO MAX was launched in 2003. Its core premise is to facilitate engagement with Welsh National Opera (WNO) through projects based on singing and storytelling, mostly achieved through participation. The programme of work has evolved over the years to include concerts featuring members of the chorus and orchestra in care homes or hospices, major choral projects involving large numbers of amateur singers, youth opera productions, projects designed for schools and work with opera in community contexts. The MAX model is to explore and unpack the elements of opera, broadening the art forms and practices to give multiple routes in for participants.*

*MAXs' vision is:*

- *WNO MAX creates innovative and inclusive work of high quality, which engages participants with WNO, opera and creativity.*
- *WNO MAX delivers memorable and powerful experiences, which impact lives, change perceptions of the company and create a sense of ownership of WNO as a whole.*

## **ARTWORKS CYMRU PATHFINDER 2014**

- *WNO MAX will broaden and deepen these relationships and develop new ones by continuing to push creative boundaries.*
- *WNO MAX will invest in and engage the company and the wider community to create greater understanding of our work.*

*MAX has a three-year programme of participative work across Wrexham, entitled Wrexham Street Songs. Each year explores one of the three main elements of opera: 1) Story/libretto 2) Voice/Singing 3) Music/Score. Blooming Voices was the first project in the second year of Wrexham Street Songs, and explored voice and signing.*

*Blooming Voices explored the emotional, social, educational and physical benefits of singing for mother and child during pregnancy, labour and after birth. The project was designed to:*

- *Give pregnant mothers tools to relax during pregnancy and perhaps during and after birth.*
- *Use singing to build confidence and strengthen bonding with the child before and after birth.*
- *Give mothers a way to express and embody the strong emotions of pregnancy in a supportive shared context.*
- *Allow a diverse group from across the community to experience aspects of opera making together.*

*The project consisted of:*

- *Helping participants to write their own lullaby for their unborn child.*
- *Creating music for the participants' lullabies.*
- *Creating a shared book containing participants' lullabies and especially commissioned illustrations.*
- *Producing a CD of the songs professionally recorded by the team.*
- *Social media contact through a project Facebook page.*

### **Conception**

*WNO designed the project to explore the issue of context for ArtWorks Cymru. The key questions for the project were:*

- *How does the hospital context change the process of the project?*
- *How does the group identity affect the shape of the process?*
- *How do you change your practice at different stages of the project?*
- *How do the artists shape a process when membership of the participant group is not stable?*

### **Planning**

*The team met together for a planning meeting before the project started.*

*The project responded to the circumstances by changing five aspects of the original plan:*

- *The initial idea was to have separate groups for adults and teenage mums, recruiting through the PRU for teenage mums and the teenage mum unit at the hospital. However, this was not possible because the PRU only saw teenagers a few weeks before their due date and the hospital unit had occasional contact and so did not have a regular base of clients.*
- *The plan was to recruit through midwives. The team produced an A4 sheet for midwives to give to their clients to explain the project but the response was minimal. Recruitment was therefore extend by putting flyers out across Wrexham, contacting Children's centres and advertising on Facebook and relevant sites such as Netmums.*
- *A local agency, Flying Start, helped WNO to find a venue for the project. The intention was for one of the venues to be on a housing estate, Caia Park, but the only venue found was outside the estate (Holt Road).*
- *The plan include an early stage of singing lullabies from a wider repertoire before creating personal lyrics and also to teach breathing exercises that would help the participants to relax. The character of the groups (small numbers, some participants*

*shy of singing, supportive of personal discussion) better suited an early introduction of creative work. The atmosphere created by having the artists singing while the participants wrote or draw was so relaxing that no further exercises were necessary.*

- *Some participants brought partners or family members to some of the sessions. This created a different dynamic, for example, the creative work helped teenage parents to bond.*

### ***Delivery***

*The project ran for eight weeks, offering two hour sessions to two separate groups in different locations – Gwersyllt and Holt Road, and an hour session in the hospital.*

*There were 11 regular participants across the two groups (six in Gwersyllt and five in Holt Road). Holt Road started with only three participants. All participants who started the project stayed until the end. The assumed drop out did not happen: some participants missed a session for the birth and then came back, with the baby, the week afterwards.*

*In retrospect, there were four lessons from delivering the project:*

- *The illustrator joined the project five weeks into the project, which was sensible from a financial point of view. However, having her attend some or all of the earlier sessions would have helped her to bond with the participants.*
- *A representative of the commissioner was present during some of the sessions, which has not happened on other WNO projects. It can be more difficult to reflect the feeling of the group, to change the format or timing of sessions (e.g. to finish early), when the commissioner is there.*
- *Having all three sessions on the same day each week was tiring for the artists. While the hospital session spread the benefit of the project and made a link to WNO's other work in the hospital (Singing Doctors), future projects might leave this element out.*
- *Recruiting individuals is more difficult than recruiting groups. A planned taster session had to be cancelled because the few people who had booked pulled out at the last moment.*

- *Although the project was very beneficial and seemed to fill a gap in providing space to consider the longer term emotional and identity issues of pregnancy, its novelty made it difficult to communicate to potential participants. Being able to show the book from this project will make future recruitment easier.*

### **Creating quality**

**The team mentioned these techniques:**

- *Responding as equals. Artists emphasised the importance of seeming approachable: ‘We don’t go in as the experts and tell them what to do. We are equals in this project.’ This is not just about what they say but also about how they move: ‘If I’ve got a group of young teenagers, I’ll do this: I’ll set up all my gear and just sit on the floor. It puts you on a level.’ Artists need to be aware of their body language: ‘I’ve seen people with participants and lean right over them like this [is standing and leans over the person next to her who is seated]. Immediately it’s the wrong body language.’ Eye contact is part of this: ‘I think that eye contact is really important. Y’ know, when you are on a level and when you do have eye contact I think they have a sense of your genuine interest, y’ know. It’s personal and it’s sort of like a physical connection isn’t it? Through looking at each other, y’ know, in the eye. ‘*
- *Building trust. Artists encouraging participants to be open by also being open themselves: ‘We build that trust with our participants, y’ know, we are sharing such personal stories – I’m sharing with them, and they’re sharing with us – not that I see it as them and us, but you know what I mean – we get such a deep trust .’*
- *Not abusing trust. It is important not to take than openness for granted: ‘Things like asking if they’re okay to share their lyrics with the group, without just going in and saying right, tell me everything you’ve written!’*
- *Being non-judgmental. Artists create space for participants to express themselves: ‘It’s not stomping on them. We know we can get the songs, that’s just through chatting to them and listening to them. Like today with the lyrics, I could have stomped on this one participant’s lyrics because the grammar was all upside down and the spelling*

*was all sideways. And she was asking if the lyrics for the lullaby were okay. They were beautiful lyrics I should have been asking her if it was okay for me to be involved in her lyrics and compose for her. It was amazing. I keep telling them there's no singing police, or lyric police. There's no right or wrong; it's their song and it's them who's allowing us to work them. '*

- *Making opera approachable. Artists see themselves as ambassadors for the art form: 'I want them not to be so scared by music, y' know. That they've met us, and liked us, and realised that we're normal.'*
- *Being responsive. There is a very careful balance between being prepared and being responsive: 'There doesn't need to be a plan all the time. And that's okay. This project is very flexible and it just flows.'*
- *Being persistent. It is important to understand and can see through initial resistance: 'You need to persist, know that they will enjoy it if they give it a chance.'*
- *Facilitating. 'A lot of it is about enabling but also getting out of the way a lot of the time.'*
- *Being playful. Artists can be relaxed and playful because they have confidence in the ability of participants: 'People aren't scared to try and play, or to make a mistake, 'cause it sounds good anyway. And if someone makes a mistake, y' know, like I squeak a note or something, it's funny. It's funny. It's like that bridge of faith in Indiana Jones. You have to have that experience in participatory art. You have to take that leap of faith and you don't know if it's going to be okay or not until you get to the other side of the bridge.'*
- *Checking participants are engaged. Artists look for signs of engagement (and disengagement): 'If they are disengaged there are signs of closure, they are disinterested, closed off. Fidgeting and avoiding eye-contact. I don't think it varies very much from art form to art form.' This includes looking at and encouraging positive body language: 'I think it's when you naturally sing – in the house, in the bathroom in the shower, or whatever – and you're completely free of any external, eugh, anything your body just naturally opens out 'cause that how it works better. And singing is so*

*much different from being an instrumentalist because it's you, it's your body. You can't say I've been having a bit of trouble with my E string recently, y' know, it's you. So that physical thing, of feeling uncomfortable immediately shows up on your body."* *"When you get the most tired, or the most stressed – y' know, if you're having an emotional low – the first place it shows is here [points to throat area to indicate voice]. I'm sure it's the same with you as a dancer, y' know, you need your body to be open, have good posture.'*

- *Increasing engagement. Presenting tasks in different ways can increase engagement: "As a music facilitator you need to have other things up your sleeve – other music, techniques – things to get people engaged, and on board, and confident to participate."* *"You know if I see someone who's not engaging I like the challenge of trying something different; not a completely different activity, but a different way in and how you're going to make a connection and make it engaging.'*
- *Creating mementos. Before the songs were recorded, a few participants recorded the music on their phones and took them into the labour room. The gentleness of the music and the reminder of what they had created gave them confidence and strength in the labour room.*
- *Seeing natural end points. Pacing is important: "It's about knowing when things come to a natural end. There will come a point in the day where you can see that actually they've had enough of that activity now.'*
- *Working with commissioners. Commissioners have different but compatible objectives: "Recognising their anxieties, and their genuine motives, and seeing it in that context. So within their little, oh gosh I hope everyone's got enough to do, I hope everybody's ok – she just wants everyone to be okay, same as all of us – and recognise that we have common ground and we want everyone to be okay.'*
- *Capturing the concept of trust in contracts. Contracts tend not to capture the relationship side of work: "And when you have your contract from the commissioner does the word trust come in to it? No, never! You will, the project will, we will.'*

- *Supporting new practitioners. Observing experienced artists can help an emerging practitioner learn about the subtle relationship aspects of participative work: ‘It’s been all about human interaction, and knowing how to read situations, and really knowing when to give and when to hold back slightly, and intuition.’*

### **Conclusions**

*This was a highly beneficial project that was closely tailored to the needs of a small group of individuals. The context and the innovative nature of the project underlined the value but also made recruitment more difficult.*

**MADE BY HAND: HEAD FOR ARTS CASE STUDY**

***Introduction***

***The sources for this case study were:***

- ***Planning documents.***
- ***Transcripts of learning meetings with the artists (Miranda Thomason, textile artist; Joanna Young, choreographer; Anna Lacey, early career artist; James Williams, composer).***
- ***Interview with Kate Strudwick from Head for Arts.***
- ***Interview with Marc Rees.***

***Background***

***Head for Arts is a community arts organisations which is a partnership of four local authorities (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Torfaen), led by Blaenau Gwent.***

***Adain Avion was a Cultural Olympiad project around an art work created from the recycled and transformed fuselage of an abandoned DC9 aeroplane by Spanish sculptor Eduardo Cajal. The art work toured to Swansea, Ebbw Vale, Llandudno and Llandow, between 24th June and 11th August 2012, with artists Marc Rees curating local artists and community responses to the plane in each locality. Altogether 120 artists were involved in Adain Avion.***

***The Head for Arts project involved the creation of:***

- ***A textile wall hanging.***
- ***Choreography based on participants' hand movements.***
- ***A non-narrative film of participants' movements, stories and experiences, to be screened in the Adain Avion plane.***

- *An original score.*

### ***Conception***

*Head for Arts designed the project to explore the issue of ownership for ArtWorks Cymru. The key questions for the project were:*

- *How do you balance the competing agendas in a project?*
- *What skills or methods are the artists employing to create shared ownership between artists and participants?*
- *How can meaningful and creative participatory experiences be developed within situations where the artist is under pressure to deliver a high quality product?*
- *What does ownership mean for artists, participants and organisations?*

*Adain Avion was identified as a possible collaborative project because of the scope to explore ownership and control in partnership with a very experienced artist, Marc Rees. Adain Avion was part of Artists Taking the Lead, which gave a natural and fascinating tension with Head for Arts' philosophy of putting participants at the lead.*

*Marc emphasised that the collaboration with Head for Arts was mutually beneficial: 'Head for Arts could liaise directly with the community and had those contacts already, they brought in the textile artists, organised a workshop in the environment centre, things that would have been more difficult for us to do.' He felt he was handing control over to Head for Arts because this part of the project was funded through them. He was happy to do this because we knew the project was in good hands and would be OK. Part of the process of Adain Avion was to give artistic freedom to the local teams.*

*Marc describes Adain Avion as a 'life changing experience,' because of the scale of the ambition. Even an established artist like Marc grows from a project like Adain Avion. He commented that ideas are coming more quickly now, he has more confidence in his creative identify and more belief in the uniqueness of what he can achieve.*

## **ARTWORKS CYMRU PATHFINDER 2014**

### ***Planning***

*Head for Arts had decided to target economically inactive women. Marc Rees was in favour of this choice because the nature of the art work, a plane, and the history of the community, mining, gave a male character which he wanted to interrogate. Community First had already supported a group of women on a photography course in the area and were an important partner.*

*In March 2012 Head for Arts organised a whole day team meeting which explained the objectives and structure for ArtWorks, the Artists in the Lead programme and the Adain Avion project. Head for Arts had clearly met its objective of finding a project with a number of agendas!*

*The group decided that participants did not need to know the complexity of the project they were joining. Rather, participants would have a gentle way into the project through drop in taster sessions hosted by Communities First in its information shop.*

*Two challenges arising with the complexity of the project were:*

- *Head for Arts usually allows artists to own the copyright from its projects. In this case, the Cultural Olympiad wanted copyright.*
- *Head for Arts was responsible for risk management in its part of the project. There were interlinked elements of the project that were managed elsewhere.*

### ***Delivery***

*Three taster sessions were run in March 2012. There was then a gap of three weeks around Easter. Making sessions took place in April, May and June 2012, with a celebration of the completion of the banner on 29<sup>th</sup> June, an evening parade on 1<sup>st</sup> July, and performances in July.*

*Participants received a copy of the film.*

*The original expectation was that the banner would be attached to the plane, whereas it was actually hung on the staircase.*

***Creating quality and ownership***

*The team mentioned these techniques, some specific to this project, but most general across their practice:*

- *Ensuring roles are clear. Head for Arts clearly set out roles in the planning meeting.*
- *Maintaining momentum. Miranda gave participants stamped addressed postcards so that they could send her ideas that came to them during the Easter break.*
- *Introducing new artists gently. Film maker came to talk to participants at a session before that at which he carried out the filming.*
- *Creating a common language. The artists said they adapt their language to different participants (and artists) in order to be accessible. ‘I don’t want to frighten people off by using the word ‘dance’ to talk about movement. Using a different language and different words means that they can relate better.’*
- *Modulating status. In participative groups like this the artists said they would give a high priority to being emotionally and physically approachable. They might make a point of emphasising that they are ‘not an expert’. This is very different from a school setting where the artist is expected to communicate authority.*
- *Not being too precious. Artists want to encourage participants to be playful, experimental, they want to give people permission to “go on and have a go”. One way of achieving this is by being laid back: ‘If someone spills paint all over the floor but you don’t shout at them you just say oops, never mind.’ This is also a frame of mind: seeing what people will come up with and being prepared for it to be very different to what the artist themselves would have done.*
- *Planning and then adapting. Artists expect to change what they are doing to fit the needs of the group and the individuals within that group. ‘When I’m walking into lead a*

*session I have to prepare, and prepare, and prepare, and I probably don't use half of what I've prepared, but it is all there.'*

- *Being professional. The artists suggested that being positive is part of being professional. 'I might be fighting off a cold or feeling tired, but it is work'. 'It sounds like a contradiction but you need to appear engaging and fun to everyone involved even if you find some them irritating or annoying or whatever. You need to have the professional approach.' 'It's not acting, because that makes it sound not real, but you do have that professional face.' 'They don't want to see anything other than a positive inspiring person that is fully in control of what's going on.'*
- *Creating focused informality. This means being relaxed but keeping an eye on the end goal. Towards the end of the project the focus might become more intense: "So rather than spending twenty minutes having that preliminary chat – which is really important to build that connection – the past couple of sessions we've literally come in and just got on with it! Because we know we've got a limited time.'*
- *Giving appropriate feedback. Artists need the skill to give feedback at the right time and in the right way. They described this as: 'Having some contact with each individual and clocking them at the start of the session'; 'Giving genuine feedback to what they've done.' 'Praising not patronising them, acknowledging their achievements'; i.e. 'Noticing what they have done.' For example: 'it's like 'ooh you've chosen some really interesting fabrics there and I can see that you like those colours'. Trying to find something to say that's positive and genuine about them as an individual.'*
- *Making progress one step at a time. This means starting with something that everyone can do to give a sense of achievement quite early on. That was why the choreography used a hand exercise: 'it's something that everyone can do'.*
- *Emphasising how the art works comes from the participants. For example, the artists would explain their thought processes to the participants, allowing them to respond, showing how they are the inspiration for the hand gestures.*

- *Creating a sense of belonging. This can be through trying to link participants with each other people by drawing out similarities in technique, colour or theme.*
- *Creating an informal environment. 'It looks like we are just having a cup of tea and a chat, and it doesn't matter what we do, and we're just playing anyway. But actually it's really been thought out.'*
- *Modelling the behaviour you want. This could be by modelling a sense of calm, so that participants slow down, let go of things that they came into the room with and can to respond to things creatively. 'It looks like you are just a natural, and you're doing it, but you work really hard to create that atmosphere.'*
- *Respecting boundaries. 'If they are offering personal stuff like that how do you just make it that safe and secure environment where they know they can do that and it won't be: "Oh, I've decided to make the centre of the textile piece that problem with your husband!'*
- *Encouraging nurturing. This can be through noticing individuals in the group who want to support other people and encouraging that.*
- *Giving a forward picture. This means giving participants a picture of what will happen in that session, and how it links to what they have done before, and to their everyday life, so that it doesn't seem too new or intimidating.*
- *Taking it one step at a time. This means filtering, limiting the information to participants to ensure that they are not frightened off.*
- *Pulling the work together. The textile artist placed participants' work on plain fabric and sewing it on to give a coherent product, smartening up some edges but ensuring that the women would still recognise the work that they contributed. 'You don't take over but you pull it together so that it's finished. What I've done is basically just placing things, it's placing everybody's work on. I've just facilitated it to be a good project- with how you frame something to make it look the best that it can; and that's whether it's textiles or whether it's a performance, how you frame something in a shot or a camera. Giving it context.'*

## **ARTWORKS CYMRU PATHFINDER 2014**

- *Giving information to the audience in an accessible format. The project used postcard programme notes.*

*There were two challenges around ownership:*

- *The artists only found out at the last minute that the performance was going to be ticketed even though it was free. They were concerned that this gave a less accessible feeling, although it was understandable given the limited space. They felt that other people did not always understand the information they needed, that they want to know about anything that will affect the interaction between the art work and the audience or participants.*
- *In previous site specific projects the artists would have had a lot of access to the space. In this case the choreographer only saw the plane a week before the performance.*

### **Conclusions**

*This was a high profile project with a large number of elements, linked to a wider project and programme. The complexity highlighted the importance of explaining the wider context to the artists at the beginning of a project and of capturing their learning.*

**COMPANY 5: SHERMAN CYMRU CASE STUDY**

***Introduction***

***The sources for this case study were:***

- ***Transcripts of learning meetings with the artists and participants (Phil Mackenzie, Artistic Director; David Britton, Writer; and John Rea, Composer).***
- ***Interview with Phil Mackenzie (Head of Creative Learning).***

***Background***

***“To Live, To Love, To Be” used physical theatre to capture the essence of Shakespeare through telling the story of a group of people who come together in a séance to call up the writer and his work. The work was performed in the round on a 6m revolving stage.***

***The objectives of the project were:***

- ***To empower a disparate group of people, of varying experiences in the dramatic world. To give them the tools to work as a growing ensemble, so that they become responsible for the creation of the material they are performing, guided by a commissioned script.***
- ***To take participants through a process that is as pleasurable as possible. The assumption is that this will lead to greater learning and parity. This takes time, a year.***
- ***To produce a performance that is engaging for those we call the audience.***

***Sherman Cymru received £10,000 from the Royal Shakespeare Company as part of Open Stages. The total cost of the project was £17,500.***

***Conception***

***Sherman Cymru designed the project to explore the issue of context for ArtWorks Cymru.***

## **ARTWORKS CYMRU PATHFINDER 2014**

*The key questions for the project were:*

- *How does the artist balance participation and outcome?*
- *What challenges do artists set themselves in order to affect transformation in the participants and also themselves?*
- *What is transformation? Why do we seek it? How do we recognise it?*
- *How does this creation process provide an imaginative and regenerative energy for the participants that help them to create transformation?*

### ***Planning***

*The project was part of the Royal Shakespeare Company project designed to support amateur dramatics companies. The funding from ArtWorks Cymru allowed the Sherman Cymru to commission a writer and composer as well as running the participant sessions.*

### ***Delivery***

*The project, and participation, evolved over time. For the first six months, involvement was a completely open process. Anyone could turn up. There were no auditions. Whoever was left after six months was the ensemble.*

*Timing was:*

- *For the first two months the group met for three hours on a Monday.*
- *For the next four months, the group met twice a week: for three hours on a Monday, and four hours on a Saturday.*
- *For the final two weeks the group met every day for four hours, 6pm until 10pm.*
- *During production week the group met for five hours as well as the production.*

*The process started with 30 people and ended up with 15. Three of the final ensemble had not acting experience at all. Three were quite experienced in amateur dramatics. The rest had some acting experience, but this could be some time in the past. Ensemble members were aged from 21 to 62.*

*Each session had three parts: improvisation with music and sound, working with the text and then putting the two together.*

*Phillip suggested these lessons from the project:*

- *Improvisation worked well in fostering participants to be present physically. This does not come naturally to many people and needs time to develop.*
- *There could have been more time on vocal exercises, basic technique - technical work on the delivery of text. Feedback from participants showed that some felt unconfident in these areas. A comment from one of the participants was: 'Ninety per cent of our rehearsals were to do with physicality and maybe ten per cent was to do with the vocals. What I would think would improve things for next time would be to have more focus in the vocals, to a certain per cent, at each and every rehearsal so that that vocabulary is built up as well as the physical.'*
- *It was important for the group members to spend time together so that there is a group belief. Peer support increases individual confidence and so encourages participants to do more interesting things would normally be the case. A comment from a participant was: 'By the time we got into the main theatre at the end we were so geared up physically and mentally that – we didn't really know what was gonna happen but – we trusted Phil, we trusted us, and there was hardly any criticism at the end. Y' know, he trusted our judgement as well. I thought it was brilliant.'*
- *High production values are important because they show the project is taken seriously. It is part of encouraging a strong and positive belief in themselves, each other, the material and the organisers.*

*This project was the first time that Phil had worked with a group with a range of ages over such a long period of time. Longer projects tend to be with young people. The project benefited from the life experience of the group and their ability to respond, their responsibility.*

*Creating quality*

*The team mentioned these techniques:*

- *Fostering the unexpected. ‘For me, all the best rehearsals are when you go into a room and I don’t know what is going to happen; that’s what I’m setting up. It’s not logical, it’s not rational, and it’s not illustrative; it’s very much about what this group of people do at this very moment in time, in this space, and in this moment of creation and play.’ Participant: ‘I don’t believe in expectations. I didn’t have any.’*
- *Structured play. ‘I only have one rule and this is a really important one. And the rule is that you are to get as much pleasure as you possibly can from what you do. And you get the pleasure from the simple decision of – or a simple statement - you tell your brain ‘I really want to be here’; from that comes presence, and from that comes pleasure. Okay. So that’s it in a nutshell. It sort of summarises everything I believe in.’ Participant: ‘All the little games and exercises did kind of – It was like a jigsaw puzzle and each session was a different part of the puzzle.’*
- *Taking time. ‘When you deeply engage with something over a durational period of time your mind lets go of what it thinks it should be doing, your body lets go of what it normally does, and a whole other set of impulses take over.’*
- *Engaging with the individual. ‘Really all you’re doing is providing the conditions and opportunities for people to find out a little bit more about themselves, and who they are, and how they think, and what they might do. That’s transformation. So transformation is going deeper inside which we rarely get the opportunity to do.’ Participant: ‘His exercises, his experiments, are all very empowering; his guidance, wisdom, knowledge, even his tellings off.’*
- *Learning from each other. ‘The participants transform themselves as they discover themselves, and reach their potential, but it’s also about seeing how transformation happens in the group as well.’ Participant: ‘Phil really empowered us as a group to trust our own instincts and discoveries, and to kinda learn that we could create the show ourselves from what happened in the moment and what happened spontaneously. And I think that’s a really lovely gift to discover yourself, y’ know, that you don’t have to be planning everything and have years of training behind you to do a really great job.’*

- *Fostering intuition. ‘It’s about them finding out a little bit more about who they are, what they can do that is beyond the logical and beyond the logical. They can embrace the unexpected and the unpredictable, the unknowing; we’ve created an arena for safe play for that to happen. A bi-product of all that – which I don’t really talk in terms of – is confidence, self-esteem, self-image.’ Participant: ‘Well, when I came along I thought that the end product would be chaotic based on the initial rehearsals and stuff [group laughs], erm ‘cause his approach is not about telling you what to do, or what formations we should make, or what kind of physicality we should have. It was about allowing you the freedom to do certain exercises, and letting those improvisations go on quite long, sometimes for an hour, sometimes for a couple of hours.’ ‘That was his approach basically; he wanted us to come up with it and come up with this physical grammar, as it were. So, I thought it would be chaotic towards the end, however, before the actual show we kind of narrowed it down and structured it. So you realised that all the things that you’d been doing you could apply to the actual show. So it became quite structured towards the end which was quite interesting. So, yeah, a lot more structured than I thought it would be.’*
- *Using sound to support characterisation. ‘I work with electronic sounds, I work with beats a lot, I work with ambience sounds, because the brain is hardwired – I always say the brain is hard wired for the metaphysical – and certain sounds can just help people get in there because we’re very susceptible to sound.’ ‘It was quite trance like with the drums and stuff. It was quite static harmonically so I created an environment; sort of sonic scenery, if you like. And they seemed to respond to that. Obviously when you add lighting and set to that, and dry ice and all that, it allows them to embody the character and lose the sense of self that’s necessary to act.’*
- *Having a clear objective and context, with a very open approach. ‘Once the context and the objective are right, the strategy can be really free.’ Participant: ‘it was like an effortless process towards the end ‘cause all the work had been done and the physical memory was in your body really.’*
- *Preparing for the sessions. ‘When I began, I was told that when you’re doing a one hour workshop you spend two hours preparing, and if you’re doing a 2 hour workshop*

*you spend four hours preparing, even if you walk into the room and throw it all into a corner. The fact that you've done it is important.'*

- *Ensuring the space is right. 'Space is really important, and what that space is. So if you lead people into a room which has got great tubes of fluorescent lighting, it's not really properly clean, okay? That's very different to if you lead people into a room and it's got a single theatre light in it, which is spotless, which is clean. People don't even notice it but the brains already gone 'ah [exhales as if relaxing] this is different.'*
- *Working as a group. 'Ensemble comes from the Latin word meaning 'accomplices'; it means we're all accomplices together, and we're all in this together, and if you start finding it difficult you don't worry about yourself you just take care of each other.'*
- *Streamlining the work. 'One of my mantras is, absolutely, less is more. I mean you strip it back to its most basic essence. But that takes a real confidence.'*
- *Mentoring new artists. 'A major mistake that theatre companies and training organisations make is that when they're dealing with inexperienced writers they team that with inexperienced directors. They go, ah, you're a young writer we'll put you with this young director and so you have the half-blind leading the half blind. What an experienced director can do for an inexperienced writer, for example, is protect them a bit. They can say that the writing is strong here, here, and here but it's weak here. So what we'll do is play up the strengths, and play down the weaknesses, and explain to the writer that's what they're doing; so then the public presentation doesn't destroy the writer but that the writer understands that it's been shaped in that way for a reason.'*
- *Encouraging layers of emotion. 'It's a very mixed group of people and one of the things that we've tried to do is to give them exposure to some less conventional approaches to Shakespearean work; partly by breaking down their perceptions of the actors physicality which is quite often a very literal one. Whatever I've got them saying Phil has normally got them doing something totally not related to what they're saying, which is a very interesting discipline.'*
- *Making links to Shakespearian interpretations. 'It ended up as a séance where Shakespeare's characters, and he himself, were brought back to life. A key principle,*

*which came as a flash, was that all the music would be derived from other pieces written about Shakespeare. I created loops from them to create atmospheres for the actors to work in.'*

- *Adapting to the participants. 'It started as a simple idea and from collaboration then it was refined and added. During rehearsals it was much simpler; here's one bit, here's another, it was an experiment and there was feedback. That's what collaboration is. And then you develop it and refine it further, so the day before things were still added. By the performance it was kinda set but I was still experimenting with it and changing it with each performance 'cause they were speeding up and slowing down 'cause they were nervous. I think the first performance was seven minutes shorter than the last.'*

### **Conclusions**

*This project demonstrated the value of having a participative process extended over a year. The key questions on transformation were particularly revealing for ArtWorks' enquiry.*

## **CONCLUSIONS AND GAPS**

### ***The partnership***

*The ArtWorks Cymru partnership was very positive. Discussion in meetings suggested that the programme:*

- *Brought partners who had not previously worked in this way together.*
- *Developed a model of reflection that has since been adapted and applied by the partners.*
- *Providing a unique opportunity to talk in depth about the nature and causes of quality in participative practice.*
- *Strengthened the relationship between the arts sector and higher education.*
- *Provided opportunities for artists to develop their practice and their approaches to reflection.*
- *Raised the profile of the participative arts sector.*
- *Provided learning to feed into the policy of the Arts Council of Wales.*

### ***Learning***

*The projects and consultation suggested that:*

- *Participatory practice has a potentially strong impact on participants and organisations. The potential benefits and the processes vary with different contexts e.g. length of project. This understanding of contextuality and quality could be better understood by commissioners.*
- *Artists bring a wide range of intellectual, social, emotional and sensory skills and aptitudes to their participative practice. It is important to communicate the skilled nature of participative work to commissioners and the wider sector to emphasise the value of employing professional artists and to ensure that participatory practice is not treated as a poor relation.*

## ARTWORKS CYMRU PATHFINDER 2014

Figure 2: Arts' skills in the different stages of a participative project

| HEADING                      | TECHNIQUES MENTIONED IN THE CASE STUDIES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Commissioning</b>         | <p><i>Translating commissioners' priorities into plans.</i></p> <p><i>Probing on the constraints on the project e.g. recruiting, venue, resources.</i></p> <p><i>Ensuring roles are clear.</i></p> <p><i>Being professional e.g. on time, reliable, consistent, not being indiscrete about the commissioner.</i></p> <p><i>Planning and then adapting e.g. having options available.</i></p>                            |
| <b>Engaging participants</b> | <p><i>Modulating status: appearing approachable e.g. giving enough personal background, not being too precious, but also inspiring the group.</i></p> <p><i>Building trust e.g. respecting boundaries, agreeing ground rules.</i></p> <p><i>Being non-judgemental.</i></p> <p><i>Creating a common (non-art form) language.</i></p> <p><i>Fostering the unexpected.</i></p> <p><i>Engaging with the individual.</i></p> |

|                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b><i>Setting the direction</i></b></p> | <p><b><i>Observing the different skill level of participants.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Giving appropriate feedback.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Being positive.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Adapting the plan to the participants.</i></b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p><b><i>Maintaining interest</i></b></p>  | <p><b><i>Not getting in the way.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Being playful/structured play.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Assessing and responding.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Checking for signs of disengagement e.g. body language.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Working with the energy in the room e.g. gently raising it, or seeing when it has come to a natural end and changing tasks.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Using other art forms e.g. sound, visuals or space to create the context for the art work.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Emphasising how the art works comes from the participants.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Creating an informal environment.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Creating focused informality.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Creating a sense of belonging in the</i></b></p> |

|                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                   | <p><i>group.</i></p> <p><i>Encouraging nurturing in the group.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Ensuring a high quality process or product</i> | <p><i>Making progress one step at a time.</i></p> <p><i>Taking time.</i></p> <p><i>Modelling the behaviour you want.</i></p> <p><i>Taking it one step at a time.</i></p> <p><i>Encouraging participants to learn from each other.</i></p> <p><i>Pulling the work together. E.g. smartening up some edges but ensuring that the participants still recognise the work that they contributed.</i></p> <p><i>Fostering intuition.</i></p> <p><i>Streamlining the work.</i></p> <p><i>Encouraging layers of emotion.</i></p> |
| <i>Learning</i>                                   | <p><i>Learning from doing.</i></p> <p><i>Finding time for reflection.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Contextuality</i>                              | <p><i>Adapting practice to different sizes and compositions of groups.</i></p> <p><i>Adapting practice to different lengths and patterns of engagement.</i></p> <p><i>Adapting practice to different forms of</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

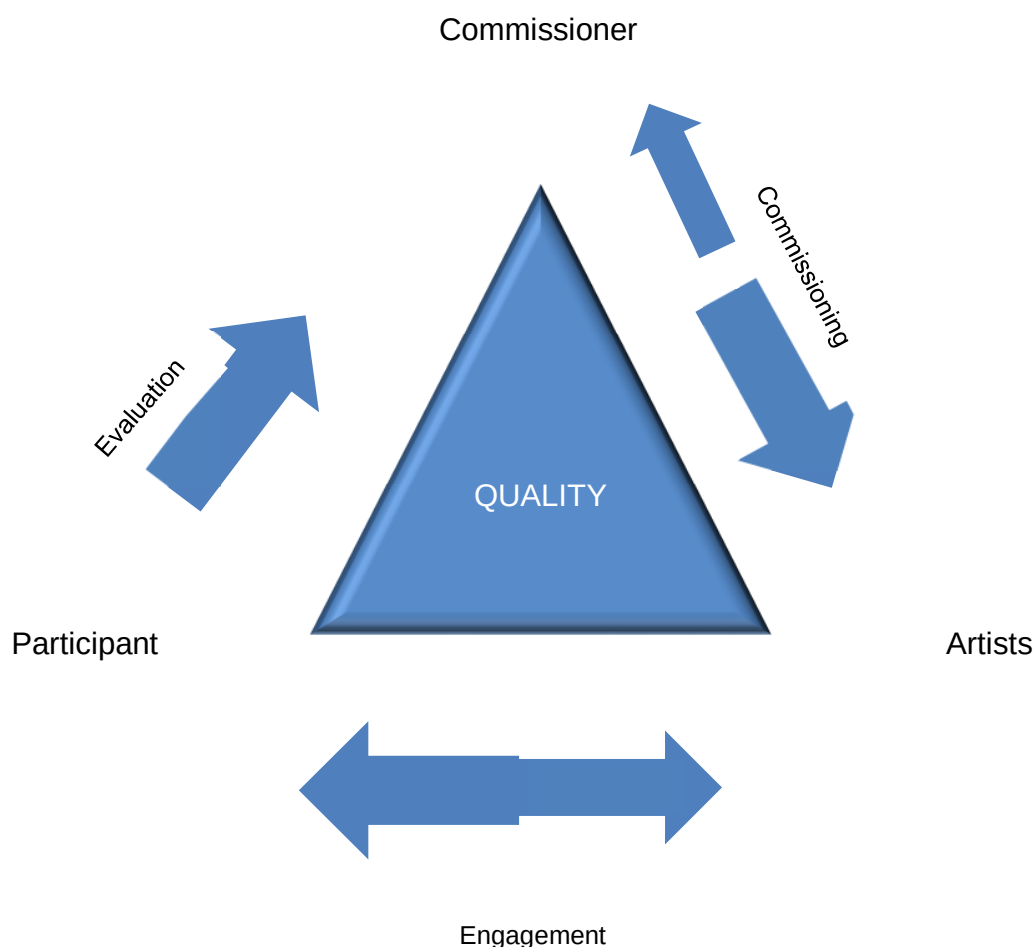
|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
|  | <i>collaboration.</i> |
|--|-----------------------|

- *Participatory practice supports the creative development of artists and should be treated as a mainstream creative activity rather than a supplementary activity.*
- *Artists tend to feel isolated and lacking in support. There is strong demand for networking and for further CPD.*
- *Views on accreditation are mixed. There are roughly equal numbers of artists and arts organisations in favour as against accreditation.*

### **Gaps**

*ArtWorks Cymru focused mainly on the perspective of the artist and the training bodies. Further work is needed on the perspective of the participants and the commissioning bodies. A small piece of work was carried out on the participants' perspective, but this didn't include a conceptualisation stage and so was too general to be insightful.*

*We suggested this model, based on our previous experience and our review of the action research and partnership meetings of ArtWorks Cymru:*



***Our model considers three perspectives on quality: those of the commissioner, artist and participant:***

- ***The commissioner interacts with the artist through commissioning, in particularly through the terms of contracting. The interaction between the commissioner and artist is two way, but not equal, which is shown by the size of the arrows in the model.***
- ***The artists interact with the participants through engagement, in particular through the techniques they employ. The interactions between the artists and the participants are two-way, and the most equal of the interactions in our model, although not equivalent.***
- ***The participants usually interact with the commissioner only through any evaluation carried out, where their experiences are translated into outcomes. This is usually a***

*one-way relationship although individual discussions or observation can add an element of dialogue.*

*Quality is affected by the resources, expectations, perceptions, beliefs, personality and constraints of each of the three perspectives:*

- *The commissioner commissions based on their objectives, their ability to articulate their objectives, and their ability to find an artist who appears to meet their needs. This usually involves some translation of social or economic objectives into artistic tasks. The commissioner is affected by their previous experiences, attitudes, knowledge, relationships, and organisational context. In practice, contracts are often drawn from non-arts contexts and contain terms that are irrelevant to, contrary to, or confusing to the creative environment, which can affect the scope to deliver quality.*
- *The artist delivers the participative work, making choices and employing models of practice, some conscious and some subconscious, designed to engage participants and take them on some kind of creative journey. The artists' finesse is affected by their training, formal and informal, role modelling, information gathering, reflection and debate. The artists' ability to deliver is affected by their finesse, the budget, the venue, facilities and support, their knowledge and understanding of the target group etc. Our action research so far has provided detailed insight into the kinds of processes that artists use in delivering participative work. We have defined processes broadly to include: body language, beliefs, techniques, use of the environment, timing, feedback, language etc. ArtWorks Cymru has more work to do on how these processes vary with different target groups and contexts, which partner case studies will inform.*
- *The participant experiences the participative work intellectually, emotionally, socially, through their senses and through time. The participants' experiences are affected by their needs, feelings, expectations, understanding, abilities, group dynamics, relationships, life context etc<sup>1</sup>. Engagement is an active process. The participant has*

---

<sup>1</sup> Further details of this section can be obtained from our Conceptualisation of Quality of Experience from the Audience Perspective, carried out for Turning Point Network and Arts Council England (2012).

*a choice whether or not to attend with sufficient depth to create a meaningful and memorable experience.*

*There has been very little evaluation of how the participants perceive the techniques employed by the artists: we know from ArtWorks Cymru's action research that artists make choices in part informed by their conscious and subconscious desire to affect participants; we do not however, know how these choices are perceived by the participants, if they have the intended or other effects, or even if the distinctions are detectable at all. The assumption is that if we improve quality, as understood by individual artists and the sector, this will improve quality for the participant. This assumption needs to be tested. Understanding of this part of the model would seem to be an essential part of the feedback mechanism.*

*The key questions are:*

- *Are participants aware of the techniques and models of practice that artists use?*
- *How are they experienced?*
- *Do they have the intended effects?*
- *How? (i.e. through which mechanisms)*
- *Do they have unintended positive and negative effects?*
- *How do these experiences and perceptions vary between participants?*
- *Is there any way of understanding the basis of these variations e.g. by age, expectations, familiarity with the arts?*

*ArtWorks Cymru increased the partnership's understanding of quality in participative practice. It is important that this understanding is communicated to commissioners, especially those outside the arts sector.*