

ArtWorks: Artist Consultations
Working Paper 4

ArtWorks : Artist Consultations (Working Paper 4)

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Preface

ArtWorks: Developing Practice in Participatory Settings is a Special Initiative of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation established in 2011 and continuing to the end of 2014. It is a workforce development scheme that seeks to meet the needs of artists at different stages in their careers – from the aspiring young artist embarking on training, to experienced practitioners who wish to progress their output. It is seeking to build on good practice to enhance the existing development infrastructure.

The overall aim of ArtWorks is:

To support the initial training and continuous professional development of artists working in participatory settings. This will enhance the quality of people's engagement in arts-led activity and the arts, and create a more professional and confident sector whose work is valued and seen as important.

Key Objectives:

- To support partnership working and pathfinder projects to develop, pilot and embed training and continuous professional development opportunities for artists

working in participatory settings at all stages in their careers and develop the support infrastructure.

- To develop a better understanding of what constitutes quality in the work through sharing good practice across art forms and demonstrating positive outcomes for participants engaged in arts-led activity and the arts.
- To gather, document and disseminate compelling evidence of positive impact as part of a wider strategy to achieve significant shifts, nationwide, through the facilitation of shared thinking across agencies and settings about workforce development issues for artists working in participatory settings.

Within the programmes of work undertaken by the five pathfinder partnerships, a large body of learning has accrued over the first 18 months of activity and we have commissioned six Working Papers that seek to crystallise this learning in clusters:

- Arts Practice in Participatory Settings
- Artists - Testing Professional Development Methodologies
- Artist Consultations
- Training and Development Providers and Opportunities
- Understanding Participant's Views
- Qualifications, Codes of Practice and Standards

This learning has been gained and reported in different ways that can be defined as follows:

- Those that have involved the pathfinders partnerships reflecting upon what they know.
- Those that have combined models (like peer mentoring, Action Learning sets) which are meant to have an outcome in their own right, and tweaked the design and used the output from those models to elucidate research questions.

- Those that have undertaken (with a range of approaches) straightforward research, expressed as such to those subjects who are contributing to it, framed formally by research questions, with data collection, analysis and synthesis in a typical format.

The ArtWorks website contains links to all of the material published to date.

The purpose of this suite of Working Papers is to assimilate and summarise this learning and extrapolate key messages so that the learning can inform not only the ArtWorks programme, but also the wider community of practice with an interest in this work. The papers were all commissioned at the mid-point in the ArtWorks programme and therefore provide a snapshot of the work and the learning at that stage.

Further reports supplement these papers and elucidate our work in different ways.

These include the *ArtWorks Interim Evaluation Report* (dha & the Institute for Cultural Practices, 2012a) and the first Working Paper which provided an overview, *ArtWorks: learning from the research* (Kay, 2012).

1 Introduction

This is one of six working papers intended to draw out, apply and disseminate the overall learning at the end of Phase 1 of ArtWorks. In the case of artist consultations the relevant documentation is:

- online survey and consultation sessions by Cymru (Sellers, 2012a, b, c)
- Skillset research by Scotland (Consilium, 2012a, b)
- Scotland's Peer to Peer Networks (Dean, 2012)
- audit, focus groups and perceptions research by the North East (Lowe, 2011; Pheby, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2012a, b)
- the North East's Peer Artist Learning project (Camlin, 2012)
- Connecting Conversations, London (Leighton-Kelly, 2012)

- Artists Labs and online survey by Navigator (Killick, 2012; Leatherdale, 2012; Salamon, 2012a, b; Community Music Labs, 2012; Johnston, 2013)

This paper consequently draws together eighteen reports of consultations with artists. Each of the Pathfinders consulted with artists at the inception of their work on ArtWorks and their views underpin and inform all aspects of the programme as it progresses. Notably, the consultations also acted as non-formal continuous professional development (CPD) for artists in providing space for cross-artform and career-stage reflection and exchange of experience. This dual purpose was most overt in Connecting Conversations (Leighton-Kelly, 2012), and further testing of methodologies for professional development are reported in *Working Paper 3: Artists - Testing Professional Development Methodologies* (Taylor, 2013).

This paper summarises an extensive resource and cannot do justice to the richness and nuances of artists' opinions, however, the *Cymru Artist Case Study Report* (Sellers, 2012a) complements the breadth of views with useful in depth interviews with five artists.

2. Context

ArtWorks arose through a concern that the field of 'participatory art' has expanded significantly in recent years but that training and professional development for artists has not kept pace with this increase, leading to variable experiences for participants. Consequently the programme has been devised as:

a workforce development scheme that seeks to meet the needs of artists at different stages in their careers - from the aspiring young artist embarking on training, to experienced practitioners who wish to progress their output. It is seeking to build on good practice to enhance the existing development infrastructure (<http://www.artworksphf.org.uk/>).

In doing so The Paul Hamlyn Foundation aims to enhance the quality of people's engagement in arts-led activity and create a more professional and confident sector whose work is valued and seen as important.

Initial research by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) into the 'arts in participatory settings' (AIPS) led to a report that sets out the characteristics of and challenges faced by the sector and established the objectives of the programme (Burns, 2010).

Growing out of community arts practice in the 60's, work that is now described as *participatory* has evolved over time and has had 'profound effect on the arts establishment through the development of infrastructure and the growing professionalism of the field forty years on artists across all art forms are now engaging in a diverse range of practices and we can see an emerging body of practice in individual art forms that has now created a burgeoning sector of work for artists who wish to engage with people' (Burns, 2012: 7).

The report goes on to estimate that between '200,000 and 250,000 might be a realistic estimate for the number of artists regularly engaging in work that requires them to facilitate the learning and creativity of others' (Burns, 2010: 8).

It concludes that 'context is creating greater demand for artists to work in participatory settings and it is arguable that artists are in greater demand than ever before to make interventions in both formal and informal settings.... Artists are being asked to work in a hugely diverse range of participatory settings' and 'Artists are now playing an integral role in the learning experiences of people across the whole age spectrum' (Burns, 2010: 26).

Despite growth in practice and demand the sector is fragmented, and work is characteristically undertaken through short-term initiatives or small individual projects. There is very little coordination between art forms, a lack of recognised training routes, and evidence of the benefits and impacts: 'no one is taking a strategic view of the needs of artists in this context' (Burns, 2010: 26))

3. Learning to date

The views expressed by artists in the ArtWorks consultations fall into eight broad categories:

- philosophies and motivations
- characteristics of the sector
- skills and qualities
- quality and evaluation
- formal training
- professional development
- methodologies for professional development
- evidence and advocacy
- professionalising the sector

3.1 Philosophy and motivation

The ArtWorks consultations with artists paint a picture of individuals who are passionate about their work in participatory settings and who are caring and generous in seeking to work equally with participants and empower others. They emphasise flexibility and aim to support participants to experiment and take risks.

They are thoughtful and analytical about their work, encouraging reflexivity during the work and valuing reflection with peers to improve practice.

These distinctive values, views and commitment inform many of their attitudes – to what constitutes ‘good practice’, to training and continuous professional development, accreditation and advocacy.

3.1.1 Motivations and values

Across the consultations artists express particular values that underpin their work:

.... the motivation often came from a passion for involving people in the community in creative work, from a political commitment to enabling self-expression, or to facilitating change for local or other communities (Mitchell et al., 2012a: 4).

All the participants said that at some point in their careers as artists they had all experienced a moment of self-identification when they clearly recognised that the participatory practice was making a significant and positive difference to the lives of the people they were working with and led them to a moment of self-realisation – a *this is what I'm meant to do* moment (Leatherdale, 2012: 6).)

Consultation carried out by ArtWorks Cymru reveals that:

Artists feel that projects should be inclusive regardless of skill, ability, health, or wealth. Artists also feel that they have to be humble about their skills, and are keen to remember that not all participants are engaged throughout all projects. Whilst artists strive to include all, they need to be aware of those that are not included (Sellers, 2012b: 17).

Artists believe that they have a great deal to offer participants but are also, in turn, inspired and energised by participants:

“Working with people. Sort of found my groove working with people in vulnerable situation – refugees, community situations, and currently with elderly – using own experience to seek to involve people in creative activity, find ways of allowing expression” (Sellers, 2012b: 7).

“Working with masks with troubled and pissed off teenagers – seeing how it started to interest and excite them with a desire to develop skills and make a piece of theatre” (Sellers, 2012b: 7- 8)

In contradiction to the majority perspective, some artists feel ‘strongly that participatory practice should be recognised as artistic practice its own right, that the separation of participatory practice from one’s own artistic practice was artificial’ (Camlin, 2012).

This workforce is also distinctive for a lack of professional competitiveness and a desire to share not only with participants but with colleagues. Artists say that they feel a 'personal responsibility to share learning' with others (Sellers, 2012(b): 9).

ArtWorks Scotland reports the 'motivated and committed' workforce as a strength of the sector, along with a willingness to share skills. (Consilium, 2012a: 22).

3.1.2 Ownership / empowerment

Artists are committed to enabling participants to take ownership of projects and developing a sense of empowerment.

"In my opinion I value the 'quality' of a participative arts project by the ability of the facilitators not to impose but to work with the group through the following stages. Engaging the group, Exploring with the group, Paths for the group to progress within the project, Ownership by the group" (Sellers, 2012c: 6).

ArtWorks Cymru research found that 'the notion that participants should feel ownership of a project is a recurring theme, and artists feel it is particularly important The ability to facilitate, rather than teach, is important when undertaking participatory arts because participatory arts should be *inspiring and enabling* rather than about telling participants what to do, or *closing down possibilities* (Sellers, 2012b: 10).

3.1.3 Inspiration / transformation

The transformative impact that art making can have on people is a widely expressed value – whether the focus is on individuals (challenging and changing perceptions, outcomes like confidence, increased social capital, skills development, aspiration etc.) or on communities and wider culture (e.g. creating and expressing shared collective identities, hearing a diversity of voices etc.) (Kay, 2012: 11)).

ArtWorks London's report noted that it's 'hard to articulate transformation' but the term is used frequently, and is a concept recognised by both artists and participants (Leighton-Kelly, 2012: 15).

This was borne out by the ArtWorks Cymru work:

Using physical changes as a way to describe inspirational experiences is a recurring method. Artists frequently use examples of projects they have been a part of where participants seemed inspired. One artist mentioned that it's "when you see a teenage slumped in a chair, and then they sit up and get involved; another artist felt that for me it's also when the participant becomes more vulnerable and the barriers come down. They sort of melt – they become softer" (Sellers, 2012b: 10).

Whilst inspiration and transformation are often seen as energising forces in some settings they have equally important gentler effects:

.... touring old people's homes and psychiatric hospitals performing to and interacting with old people ravaged by dementia – seeing and experimenting with what theatre and music could do – how theatre could calm people (Sellers, 2012b: 8).

3.1.4 Process and product

The consultations found that concept of risk and experimentation is fundamental to artists and they take pride in arts education that supports risk; 'Britain offers a unique process-driven approach to training artists which is perceived as a valuable global asset in fostering creativity' (Leatherdale, 2012: 10).

This translates into both a personal interest in taking risks and enabling participants to experiment, and to placing a high value on process as well as, or more importantly, than product:

In animation work one participant said that for her animation came second to the welfare of the people she was involved with – it is a tool to be creative The most important quality in her workshops is people/listening skills etc. This was echoed by another participant; “the stuff is not about what I am doing it’s about the group...About them exploring their voice”. Art is a means to get somewhere else.’ (Pheby, 2012: 14)

Working in participatory settings can produce quality products. But ‘authored’ work is not encouraged. For one film/video maker the process of working in schools and with young people was as important as the final product. You enable them to have a voice and keep ‘your’ voice out of it. Initially it was the film at the end that mattered, now the process of getting there is valued (Pheby, 2012: 14).

Artists are sensitive to the need for different balances between process and product in different contexts. When working with people with dementia ‘the idea of progression towards an end product may have to be set aside and the value of process be embraced’ and ‘emotional expression has to be promoted in settings where this is often discouraged as disruptive.’ (Killick, 2012: 2)

3.1.5 Care and safety

The learning demonstrates that artists are concerned to work with participants in a safe environment, creating a space that is physically safe but where people feel respected and have the support and freedom to explore and take risks.

Artists feel they have to be strong, whilst also striving to create a safe environment for participants a supportive atmosphere for participants has to be created in order that participants are safe to explore during a session. Participants have to be able to *trust* the artist in order to feel that they can rely on someone with expertise (Sellers, 2012b: 15).

Artists consider after care for artists and participants: ‘During the lifetime of a participatory project artists and participants often forge a strong relationship: “*At that*

moment that project is everything. At the end of the project there is a big come down". (Sellers, 2012b: 14).

Participants' perspective on the skills and qualities that artists bring to participatory settings is explored in *Working Paper 6: Research with Participants* (Salamon, 2013c).

3.2 Characteristics of the sector

3.2.1 Contexts

The consultations highlight that artists work in a wide range of settings; the ArtWorks North East report on work with people with dementia alone lists day centres, arts centres, care homes, hospitals, doctors' surgeries and people's own homes (Killick, 2012: 4).

Artists have to take into account the differing needs of participants and also involve staff in those settings, including teachers, clinical staff and families:

For another writer working in a day centre with older people with dementia the staff worked hard to enable the writer to come in and she took staff views into account so that they could use some of the approaches themselves When working with teachers one writer focused on things that are sustainable for the teachers so that project work could be continued (Pheby, 2012: 6).

3.2.2 Careers and hierarchies

The consultations reveal that many artists have a strong vocational drive to work in participatory settings but there is no clear training or route for people who want to pursue a career in the sector:

Some artists felt that *career* was an outdated term that suggested a linear progression within one field, which they did not associate with their own development (Leighton-Kelly, 2012: 13).

Artists talked about the role of ‘serendipity, risk and unexpected’ in their career (Leatherdale, 2012: 6) whilst one said, *I’ve never thought of it as a career but I’ve been doing it for ten years* (Pheby, 2012: 17).

There is also an economic imperative to find other sources of income than individual creative practice (Leatherdale, 2012: 6):

They all felt it was very unfortunate that more artists were not making a positive and proactive choice to work as community practitioners but agreed this lack of positive choice happened because there was still very poor careers advice in relation to the arts, coupled with a societal pressure that valued ‘high/performance’ arts over community practice. All participants agreed that participatory practice was highly rewarding, offered positive creative challenges to the artists and participants, was diverse in content and context, offered a steady and adequately paid source of employment and offered good support structures thanks to the various local and national support organisations (Leatherdale, 2012: 6).

Career expectations differ somewhat between art forms, and there are different perceptions of hierarchy and respect. For the visual arts sector, ‘work in participatory settings had been seen by most staff and students as second class’, whereas ‘what is significant about the music industry is that a very large number of performers also teach or get involved in participative work.... And see no boundary between being a performer and helping others to learn to make music’ (Mitchell et al., 2012a: 69).

Artists felt strongly that there was a need to ‘tackle a perception that the work of artists in participatory settings is inferior to the production of high-quality art’ (Consilium, 2012a: 23) including amongst funders (Pheby, 2012: 24).

Some artists made comparisons with other professions:

Elsewhere ‘participants’ raised the issue of the need to raise the professionalism of the Artist alongside other more recognised professions e.g.

“I practice like you practice other disciplines (Law, Medicine, Healthcare etc.) but ‘Artist/Writer’ isn’t perceived to be on the same level”(Camlin, 2012: 11).

3.3 Skills and qualities

3.3.1 Knowledge and skills

Artists consulted, unsurprisingly, see their own artistic training as the foundation for their work in participatory settings, as it provided the opportunity to experiment:

They had needed to gain an understanding of the fundamental principles relating to their art form (i.e. the body and use of space for dancers, language and the structures of form in writing, etc.). Having time to develop their practical artform-specific skill had been a central part of their early arts education. They had needed the time to explore, practice and experiment. Trial and error had been a central part of this process for them all (Leatherdale, 2012: 5).

There is general agreement on the further skills required for participatory work and it is felt that most are common across art forms and for different participatory contexts. These include both the skills required to work with participants and those needed to run a business: Personal organisational skills; self-discipline; time management; people management; effective communication; creative networking; leadership; developing emotional understanding in participants; contextual skills (policies, copyright, safeguarding etc.) (Leatherdale, 2012: 9).

3.3.2 Qualities and behaviors

Beyond these skills, artists consulted raised personal qualities that they believe are important to successful participatory work.

The ArtWorks North East’s Peer Artist Learning project listed passion, confidence, selflessness, flexibility, respect for yourself and all participants, and they talked about this set of qualities as an artist’s ‘shining core’ (Camlin, 2012: 12).

Artists express strong interest in working collaboratively, with participants, with colleagues and with artists across art forms, and ‘a *sense of humour*, an ability to *accept offers* of help, and ability to *build rapport* are also thought to be important when developing collaborations’ (Sellers, 2012b: 15).

3.4 Quality and evaluation

3.4.1 ‘Good practice’ and quality

Artists discussed in the consultations what they understand by ‘good practice’, what constitutes quality and how it can be evaluated. Artists find it difficult to communicate what a ‘quality’ project is (Sellers, 2012b: 19) although there is widespread agreement on the factors that comprise good practice.

The most common description of a quality participatory experience is one that leads ‘to empowerment and transformation for the participant’ (Leighton-Kelly, 2012: 14).

However, artists are concerned that:

The lack of a shared sense of excellence – a framework for understanding what goes into making excellent practice – would ... seem to be an impediment to effective discussion and communication within the sector. And beyond the sector, it must harm the perception of the work if we’re not able to articulate what separates good practice from that which is less good (Lowe, 2011: 44) and (Kay, 2012: 19).

Consilium recommends that Creative Scotland should:

Explore the feasibility of establishing a kite mark or quality standard for artists working in participatory settings to support commissioners through the procurement process (Consilium, 2012b: 6).

However, whilst seeing the need for a shared understanding of quality, artists appear

cautious about this:

Reactions to a kite mark are mixed. Whilst some artists were not against the development of a kite mark, there is unease about how this would be implemented, and who would be implementing it (Sellers, 2012a: 2).

3.4.2 Evaluation

The consultations found that there are contradictions in artists' attitudes to evaluation; one artist proposed that practice "was self-regulatory – if you are no good don't do it"(Phelby, 2012: 15). In keeping with artists' interest in reflection it was suggested that projects include a 'peer-to-peer/artists-to-artist review process/framework, which is built on trust, is confidential and private. The review to provide: time for reflection, a review of performance, include artists watching each other in action, joint mentoring/support opportunity (Salamon, 2012b: 6).

However, it was widely agreed that the 'lack of a robust evidence base to demonstrate impact' is holding back the sector (Consilium, 2012a: 22). Practical examples included 'there is no way for community organisations to measure or assess the quality of the artists' work before they engage them' (Phelby, 2012: 10).

Further, evaluation is believed to be essential and 'should be seen as part of a continual process, not as an add-on. The more objective aspects of an evaluation, however, were better accomplished by an external assessor. Although quantitative methods have their uses, the various qualitative approaches were more appropriate for arts subjects and should be further developed. The well-being scales from occupational therapy could be explored, and Newcastle University was developing a tool which combined monitoring and evaluation' (Killick, 2012: 4).

3.5 Formal training

3.5.1 Art form training

For artists consulted, 'getting to know their genre and the skills required for the production of art had formed the central part of their vocational training. They had all been given the opportunity to get to know the material that was central to their craft' (Leatherdale, 2012: 3).

However, artists regret that discipline specific courses tend to be run separately and would like to see 'more connections between departments and disciplines and higher education institutions... These ideas have begun to filter into the undergraduate programme at the Guildhall School through elements like the Cross School project (curricular) and CoLABorate (extra-curricular... and a post-graduate Leadership course which operates across artforms' (Leighton-Kelly, 2012: 17).

3.5.2 Vocational training for participatory practice

Artists commonly reported 'learning on the job'. In the ArtWorks Cymru research, 54% of all respondents say that they have not had formal training. Of artists that have undertaken formal training 23% have completed PGCEs or teaching certificates and 31% have undertaken training through university degree schemes or college courses (Sellers, 2012c: 2):

PGCEs are 'felt to be useful in the development of understanding group dynamics and how people learn' (Sellers, 2012b: 5).

Overall, artists expressed a range of experience of vocational training through HEIs. There is wide variation in the extent to which students studying art subjects at university engage in participatory work, depending on the artform, emphasis of the course and students' personal interests:

For courses where participatory practice is an essential element of the course (such as the Community Music Degreeopportunities include community projects and placements which start from the beginning of the course..... and routes into mentoring, apprenticeships and internships following the course' (Mitchell et al., 2012a: 66).

However, artists questioned the effectiveness of training:

A very strong point was made about the apparent disjunction between what undergraduates learn about Participatory Arts practice during their study, and what they need to function as professional artists post graduation with a *protean or portfolio* career and points out that 'this is a much bigger issue than can be resolved here, and represents a significant challenge for Higher Education in general' (Camlin, 2012: 13).

3.5.3 Qualifications

Participants discussed the value of qualifications and pointed out that:

some employers, particularly those in the education or health sectors, valued qualifications. It was agreed that qualifications acted as an accepted 'short-hand' that helped employers identify the level of experience that practitioners might have. It also showed a level of commitment to the practitioner's own desire to learn and refresh their knowledge of the subject (Leatherdale, 2012: 10), and 'some institutions gained organisational credibility if their employees were well qualified' (Leatherdale, 2012: 11).

At the same time participants agreed that in most instances employers have a very poor understanding of what has been demanded of a practitioner for them to have acquired a specific qualification. They felt that this mirrored well most employers' general lack of understanding about the skills and knowledge needed to be an effective arts practitioner in any context (Leatherdale, 2012: 11).

3.5.4 Careers

There was frequent concern amongst the artists consulted that HEIs perpetuate myths about the potential careers for artists; 'lack of adequate careers advice still left those attracted to the arts sector with a false view of what life as an artist could be and failed to show arts in a participatory context as a viable and valuable option' (Leatherdale, 2012: 3).

A common theme in discussions was the ‘gap between training and the realities of the workplace’ (Leighton-Kelly, 2012: 13) and the need for better careers advice in universities:

“More and more of my peers have gone on to do an MA in community music because when they started their training they didn’t realise what they were actually going to be doing. Of course they all wanted to be concert pianists but you can’t actually earn your money that way....” (Leatherdale, 2012: 5).

These views were balanced by the view that when students are studying an art form they concentrate on their own practice and are not generally interested in participatory work – although again, there appear to be distinctions between art forms and courses.

An overview of what ArtWorks has learnt about training and professional development can be found in *Working Paper 5: Training and Development Providers and Opportunities* (Schwarz, 2013) and *Working Paper 7: Qualifications, Codes of Practice and Standards* (Salamon, 2013d).

3.6 Continuous professional development

3.6.1 Demand

The consultations reveal a great appetite for CPD amongst artists with 99% interested and 62% willing to pay in the Cymru online survey (Sellers, 2012c: 2), and artists in all areas of Wales report that CPD opportunities have had a significant impact on their careers’ (Sellers, 2012c: 6).

This is due to the interest that artists have in learning, the range of routes into participatory practice, and the variable levels and quality. In addition, artists work in a wide range of contexts, which may demand specific skills and knowledge.

The question of training and professional development of artists working in participatory settings is something that drew very high levels of personal motivation, passion and opinion from the participants (Camlin, 2012: 9).

Artists feel that there are 'not enough opportunities for existing participatory practitioners to upgrade skills and reflect / learn from each other and build up own practice' and 'having an understanding of theory and practice leads to a more sustainable practice' (Pheby, 2012: 23 & 27).

The ArtWorks Cymru online survey revealed that 46% of artists have undertaken other training during their careers, examples including Tutor's Certificate in Community Music validated by Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and a Community Dance Apprenticeship along with short courses on running a workshop or working in criminal justice settings.

3.6.2 Professional isolation

Professional isolation emerged as a strong reason for artists' interest in CPD, which is significant for many and particularly for those in rural locations:

Many artists feel isolated and although they recognise this is partly due to the nature of the job (particularly for freelance artists), they would welcome more opportunities to network and share learning. Artists in North Wales in particular feel very isolated and express frustration that *everything happens in Cardiff* (Sellers, 2012b: 3).

Many artists working in the field reported high levels of professional isolation, and recognised and welcomed the value of training which helped them to contextualise their own practice within a broader community (Killick, 2012: 9).

Peer support is particularly important in challenging settings. The ArtWorks Navigator report on working with people with dementia recommends 'that regular meetings of writers and artists working in the field should take place to combat isolation and promote innovative practices (Killick, 2012: 6).

3.6.3 Cross art form

Artists from a range of art forms participated in the consultations and there is no 'perceptible difference between the type and range of activities engaged in by practitioners from different art forms'. They 'welcomed the idea of CPD across art forms as artists felt that this had the potential to stimulate discussions and could lead to cross-artform collaboration' (Leatherdale, 2012: 13).

Following the Connecting Conversations project 89% of artists reported that 'being in groups with artists from different art forms definitely or probably enhanced their experience' (Leighton-Kelly, 2012: 4).

3.6.4 Specific settings

Artists and commissioners recognise the need for specific knowledge to work in certain settings:

The team of professional performers that deliver Hearts and Minds' *Elderflowers* programme with elderly people with dementia in Scotland, for example.....receive specific training to work in healthcare environments with vulnerable people.

And

Artists involved in the majority of action research projects with older people with dementia run by engage Cymru received awareness training from the Alzheimer's Society and Bangor University Dementia Research Department (Killick, 2012: 11).

Helix had specific schemes so that artists get advice about working with particular groups e.g. young offenders, people with mental health issues (Phelby, 2012: 26).

3.6.5 Accreditation

Artists continue to express mixed views about accreditation; ArtWorks Scotland's Skillset research summarises views across the consultations, reporting:

A range of views were expressed during the consultation days regarding the value of accredited learning against non-accredited provision. A number of participants challenged a perceived *obsession with accreditation* and questioned the extent to which this was the most appropriate route through which to deliver skills development support for artists. Whilst it was generally agreed that it was likely to be strongly influenced by the career stage of the artist, concerns were raised over the ability of artists working in participatory settings to pay for accredited courses.

Participants also highlighted a danger of creating a *curriculum for working in participatory settings* which could potentially stifle creativity, diversity and the ability of artists to respond to the specific context of the setting that they are working within. The expectations of commissioners with regards to the nature of qualifications held by artists seeking work in participatory settings was identified as an important driver and required further exploration (Consilium, 2012a: 24).

In addition some artists:

felt that having nationally recognised qualifications as a result of a CPD course was important because some employers were so unfamiliar with the issues that arts practitioners needed to learn that they needed to have the short-hand approval provided by a national recognized qualification in order to feel confident that the arts practitioner had engaged in CPD that was of value (Leatherdale, 2012: 13).

And freelancers felt there is 'a lack of official certification/routes to qualification for arts freelancers that could allow them to operate with participants outside of major (and therefore threatened) funded projects (Phelby, 2012: 1).

The ArtWorks Scotland Skillset report proposes ‘a possible route to mitigate the need for artists to undertake further training by recognising the value of skills and experience already evident across the sector. Experiential or certificated prior learning can both be submitted for accreditation. In the case of experiential learning this would require artists to produce a portfolio of evidence in order to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes of modules and levels for which they are seeking credit (Consilium, 2012a: 24).

3.7 Methodologies for professional development

3.7.1 Learning styles

Artists consulted list a range of methodologies for CPD, including conferences, short courses, publications and online resources. Not surprisingly, given the dialogical nature of participatory practice, they favour learning by doing, through observation, mentoring/tandem programmes and through reflection with other artists – there is a constant reference to the lack of time for artists to reflect on their practice, with ‘artists demanding that time for reflection be built into projects and recognised as valid by funders’ (Leighton-Kelly, 2012: 16):

A recurring theme throughout the consultation days was the need to substantially increase the opportunities for artists to gain hands-on practical experience within settings through placements (often referred to as experiential learning (Consilium, 2012a: 21)

3.7.2 Reflection

Artists taking part in the consultations place great store on reflection, believing it is:

hugely important to review and reflect upon their participatory practice because: “even if you do it wrong, you reflect to make it better” but frequently say that “time constraints hinder meaningful reflection”..... and would welcome more opportunity to have “space away from the coal face” to consider their practiceArtists list a wide range of methods for reflection

including soliciting feedback, keeping a blog, peer discussion, observation and comparisons (Leighton-Kelly, 2012: 13).

3.7.3 Role of organisations

There was the widely held view amongst artists consulted that arts organisations have a key role to play in providing CPD for artists.

The ArtWorks North East focus group discussed the contribution of the Sage apprenticeship or traineeships scheme which has supported more than a hundred musicians into professional practice as ‘musicians who teach’ since 2003 (North East, 2012: 13) and increased the workforce hand in hand with developing opportunities for work in participatory settings (Pheby, 2012: 19).

Other examples include ‘a project between East Durham Arts Network and Easington Council mentoring was built in’ and ‘Isis Arts did mentoring schemes which was very helpful to one artist when he was starting out’ (Pheby, 2012: 26).

Artists worry that the sector has ‘faced erosion’ and ‘key organisations, and online networks, have lost funding which has led to a loss of knowledge:

“Those organisations had all sorts of information, whether you believed it or not,” ... (National Community Arts) had all sorts of information, whether or not you took it on board, it was a mine of information”Visual arts practitioners in particular feel that there is nowhere that learning can be shared because the “visual arts organisations have gone from Wales” (Sellers, 2012b: 9).

3.7.4 Courses

Many artists consulted had attended short courses in a range of topics ranging from “a single day of training on how to lead a workshop –and then in at the deep end” (Sellers, 2012b: 8) to longer and more specialised courses including ‘art therapy, play therapy, sand therapy, music therapy, creative therapy’ e.g. Advanced Diploma in the Therapeutic & Educational Application of the Arts (Phelby, 2012: 17),

and training for particular settings, as discussed in 2.6.

Again, artists appreciate practical applications, with direct relevance to their work:

“Training for one week only with Curis Jounstow, and his experience of creating theatre in prisons” (Sellers, 2012b: 6).

There is a growing role for on-line courses;

One on-line course had provided access to very high calibre coaches and provided the opportunity for participants to interact with one another and their tutors (Leatherdale, 2012: 13).

3.7.5 Online

Artists consulted report sharing learning either informally or more formally online, along with using the internet to self-publish and create opportunities for others to learn. However, there was also a concern amongst some that ‘there are no safe online spaces to share learning’ (Sellers, 2012b: 8 & 9).

Of artists surveyed by ArtWorks Cymru, ‘99% are already part of online social networks and professional bodies. Facebook is popular amongst participatory artists of all ages, while Twitter is particularly popular amongst male participatory artists. Female participatory artists are more likely to be members of professional bodies as well as other online networks (Sellers, 2012c: 4).

Artists had also found resources online that support and inform their practice, including ‘Air (an) Guides, Artists in Creative Education (A:CE) handbook (downloadable) online for artists wanting to work in schools (across Europe).....Community Dance Foundation....Regular Marvels (Pheby, 2012: 10).

3.7.6 Observing and volunteering

Artists discussed the need to do some voluntary or unpaid work to establish their practice, and in the North East consultations cited the volunteering opportunities offered in film and community radio (Phelby, 2012: 17:

Need minimally paid opportunities, taster opportunities at several levels, and opportunities to observe others doing participative work, by being co-leaders, and through volunteer opportunities and trainee positions, and music leadership skills, you can get really good experience in two days if well-structured (Phelby, 2012: 23).

3.7.7 Mentoring and placements

Artists at the ArtWorks Cymru consultations refer to inspirational figures who have offered them opportunities or new ways of thinking:

“Working with Theatr Iolo in Cardiff and Arts Education company at the time, under the guidance of Kevin and Glenys” (Sellers, 2012b: 5).

One artist reported that a particular practitioner “was good at working with the children, but at the end he was also very good at analysing and saying why he did things. For me it had a huge impact on my practice” (Sellers, 2012b: 14).

ArtWorks Scotland reports a demand for ‘placements to facilitate skills transfer and embed learning’ and for there to be an ‘increase the use of mentoring and residencies’ (Consilium, 2012a: 22).

Mentoring was seen by many artists consulted by ArtWorks London ‘as a hierarchical relationship in which an established artist might mentor an emerging artist. It was felt that a more useful relationship might be between “people who have gone through different things to learn at different stages”, with a strong steer towards peer and group mentoring as preferable models (Leighton-Kelly, 201-12: 13).

It is pointed out that artists – especially less experienced ones – might face difficulties working with particular groups and need mentoring by specialists. The North East

focus group mentions 'Tandem Training, which is used in community media, and discussed the value of shadowing / mentoring / and coaches, particularly for people early in their careers, and suggested that the Northern Cultural Skills Partnership and Creative Partnerships (both now closed) and Sage, Gateshead, might provide models (Pheby, 2012: 8 & 25).

3.7.8 Communities of practice

The ArtWorks North East Peer Artist Learning report discusses the concept of 'communities of practice', which appeals to many artists as it reflects their democratic values and approach to shared learning:

If it is possible to consider the diversity of these practices and approaches as constituting some kind of 'community of practice,' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) then it is an evolving, organic and emergent one, which changes with its constituent population, their artistic concerns and interests, and the participant communities they engage with through the work. Induction into this 'community' through training needs to be done in such a way which recognises the fundamentally temporal, emergent and evolutionary nature of the practices (Camlin2012: 9).

Methodologies for professional development are discussed in more detail in *Working Paper 3: Artists - Testing Professional Development Methodologies* (Taylor, 2013).

3.8 Evidence and advocacy

3.8.1 An evidence base

There is considerable concern amongst the artists consulted that the sector lacks a strong evidence base and debate about how the benefits and impacts of artists' work in participatory settings can be evidenced.

ArtWorks Scotland's report lists as weaknesses of the sector: 'lack of robust evidence to demonstrate impact' and the need to 'establish a common standard for artists working in settings' (Consilium, 2012a: 22).

3.8.2 A coordinated sector

Challenges to the sector are believed to include the 'Absence of a coordinated policy or strategy to govern artists working in participatory settings'. And 'establishing dialogue with commissioners at a national level' (Consilium, 2012a: 22).

3.8.4 A common language

Working Paper 1 discusses the fact that there is not a widely agreed and understood name, descriptor for or language associated with art in participatory settings (Kay, 2012: 4). This is true within the sector and amongst stakeholders and commissioners and impacts on training, commissioning, evaluation and advocacy, at an individual and meta level:

Being able to articulate your work and your values is seen as an essential skill. A particular issue was raised around the language used in marketing participatory projects in relation to other artistic work (Pheby, 2012: 16)

Participants in the ArtWorks Scotland consultations highlighted:

that the absence of a common language across different stakeholder groups represented a barrier to cross-sector dialogue and the development of partnership approaches. Establishing an agreed and understood set of definitions and terminology was identified as a practical and necessary step to reduce misunderstanding and encourage a stronger coordinated approach to supporting skills development for artist working in participatory settings (Consilium, 2012a: 25).

3.8.5 The commissioner perspective

The consultations revealed that artists believe that commissioners have a different understanding and expectations of art in participatory settings. ArtWorks Scotland research reports as weaknesses; 'Relationships between artists and host/commissioner underdeveloped', 'Unrealistic commissioner expectations' and as a challenge 'A focus on output led commissioning' (Consilium, 2012a: 22):

Artists would also like (art) organisations to facilitate a change in attitude with commissioners and funders. Artists feel that it is very important that projects are provided with adequate resources, both in terms of quality materials and time. Artists say that having an outcome, or end product, is important but they would like commissioners to place more emphasis on providing time for participants to explore creatively (Sellers, 2012b: 19).

Artists are particularly frustrated by short-term projects that are expected to deliver 'longer term' outcomes such as seeing change in the community (Sellers, 2012b: 14).

Stakeholders can influence outcomes in ways that practitioners (who are typically less prescriptively goal centred) find unsatisfactory.....Practitioners are often discouraged from participating by the culture of outcomes and evidence..... Stakeholders are often reluctant to fund projects that cannot outline achievable outcomesStakeholders often enforce content control where practitioners don't believe this is suitable (Pheby, 2012: 2).

3.8.6 Brokerage and advocacy

Artists consulted believe that there needs to be stronger brokerage for art in participatory settings and discussed who can best advocate for the sector. Arts organisations are seen to be crucial, although 'Some large organisations are seen as inflexible. Often participatory work can seem like box ticking for them, particularly where the learning team is a separate department (Pheby, 2012: 16).

However, there are more positive examples of 'Brokers such as Helix Arts, the Forge, and music consultants are important, and also the cultural venues, charitable

institutions (Pheby, 2012: 20):

Dance City has a list of professional artists and anyone can join that, so DC can then draw on the list to advertise the opportunity to artists they would suggest. This is the 'Fit to Lead' list, criteria to get on the list – got to have public liability insurance, CRB check and First Aid Certificate (Pheby, 2012: 10).

People relied on Creative Partnerships for a long time. This was very successful. It is difficult to approach schools without the 'agent' and network approach that CP had (Pheby, 2012: 14).

Artists avowed the need to be proactive in gaining work. It was claimed that 'Work in participatory settings does not tend to get advertised. You need to publicise that you work in this area – e.g. make it known that as a film-maker you do work in schools. It is also about the relationships you make with arts and funding organisations which lead to work (Pheby, 2012: 15).

Some artists had set up groups to better promote and coordinate participatory work; 'She had set up *HEART Healing Education Animation Research Therapy* - to promote therapeutic use of animation (Pheby, 2012: 14).

3.9 Further professionalising the sector

The ArtWorks consultations raised a number of ways in which the artists believe the participatory arts sector needs to be further professionalised if the challenges set out by PHF are to be met. These would include:

- the establishment of a common definition and use of language
- a coordinated approach to training and qualifications and for CPD and accreditation
- a skills framework with associated recognition for experience and associated rates of pay
- a framework for evaluation

- evidence of outcomes and impact

It was proposed by artists consulted by ArtWorks North East that there should be an organisation specifically responsible for arts and dementia (Killick, 2012: 5) and the North East focus group asserts 'there is a need for an informative, supportive, and sympathetic cross-arts organisation to strengthen existing participatory arts practice, and for a programme of developmental courses at all levels to ensure the evolution of arts practice in the region (Phelby, 2012: 3).

However, there is a commonly held view across the consultations that the numerous artform and setting associations probably militates against coordinated status, training, advocacy etc. The need for a national organisation to represent the sector is summarised in the conclusion of the ArtWorks North East Focus Group report:

Space exists for the establishment of a sympathetic and informative umbrella organisation for participatory arts which this project could seek to fill, and a role for universities and partner institutions in providing recognised training and qualifications in participatory arts. Development of framework/benchmark documents around participatory arts practice might be a necessary precondition for such an organisation to be workable. Integration with existing projects suffering funding cuts might prevent duplication of effort. Accessible dissemination (probably web-based) of information would be helpful for both participants and practitioners (Phelby, 2012: 2).

4 Considerations

A number of considerations arise out of the consultations with artists at this interim stage in the ArtWorks programme.

Firstly, it is worth noting that whilst each Pathfinder carried out intensive consultation with artists at the beginning of their programmes of work, artists are continuing to be involved in the research projects, in testing methodologies for professional development and in appraising the programme as it develops. One of the Pathfinders, Navigator, is particularly informed by and is positioned to reflect the

views and needs of artists as it represents more than 25,000 practicing artists through a consortia of membership organisations: the National Association for Writers in Education (NAWE), a-n The Artists Information Company, Artquest, Soundsense (community music), the Foundation for Community Dance (FCD) and engage, the National Association for Gallery Education.

An overarching evaluation of the ArtWorks programme is being carried out by over-DHA Communications and the Institute for Cultural Practices, University of Manchester and consultation with artists form a strong strand of the evaluation methodology.

In reviewing the consultations carried out by the ArtWorks Pathfinders questions arise and issues that merit further research emerge. These are evident in this Working Paper and have been identified by the Pathfinders, informing their projects in the second phase of the programme. In brief, these include:

- Navigator examining how, beyond ArtWorks, their membership organisations can collectively collaborate to provide a strong voice for all artists working in participatory settings
- in Scotland the ArtWorks peer-to-peer networks are exploring how they might maintain these structures for reflection and CPD beyond the life of the programme
- similarly, ArtWorks Cymru is investigating how structures can be set up to embed learning for artists in participatory projects
- smaller partners in the programme are looking at the issues and constraints of scale in supporting artists
- ArtWorks London is testing a fellowship programme to provide individual artists with a structured programme of CPD and access to support
- ArtWorks North East is developing a pilot online learning portal

A further important aspect of ArtWorks is the potential for building capacity in the sector through the programme itself, and the conversations between artists, providers, membership organisations, training providers, arts organisations and a

range of commissioners.

The consultations with artists, with academics and commissioners, reveal fundamental questions about the origins of participatory practice, its status as an artistic practice and the distinctions between participatory and community arts. They also demonstrate different understandings of the practice and use of language and terminology. It would appear that a history of the development of participatory arts, contexts and descriptors would be a valuable tool in taking the sector forward.

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